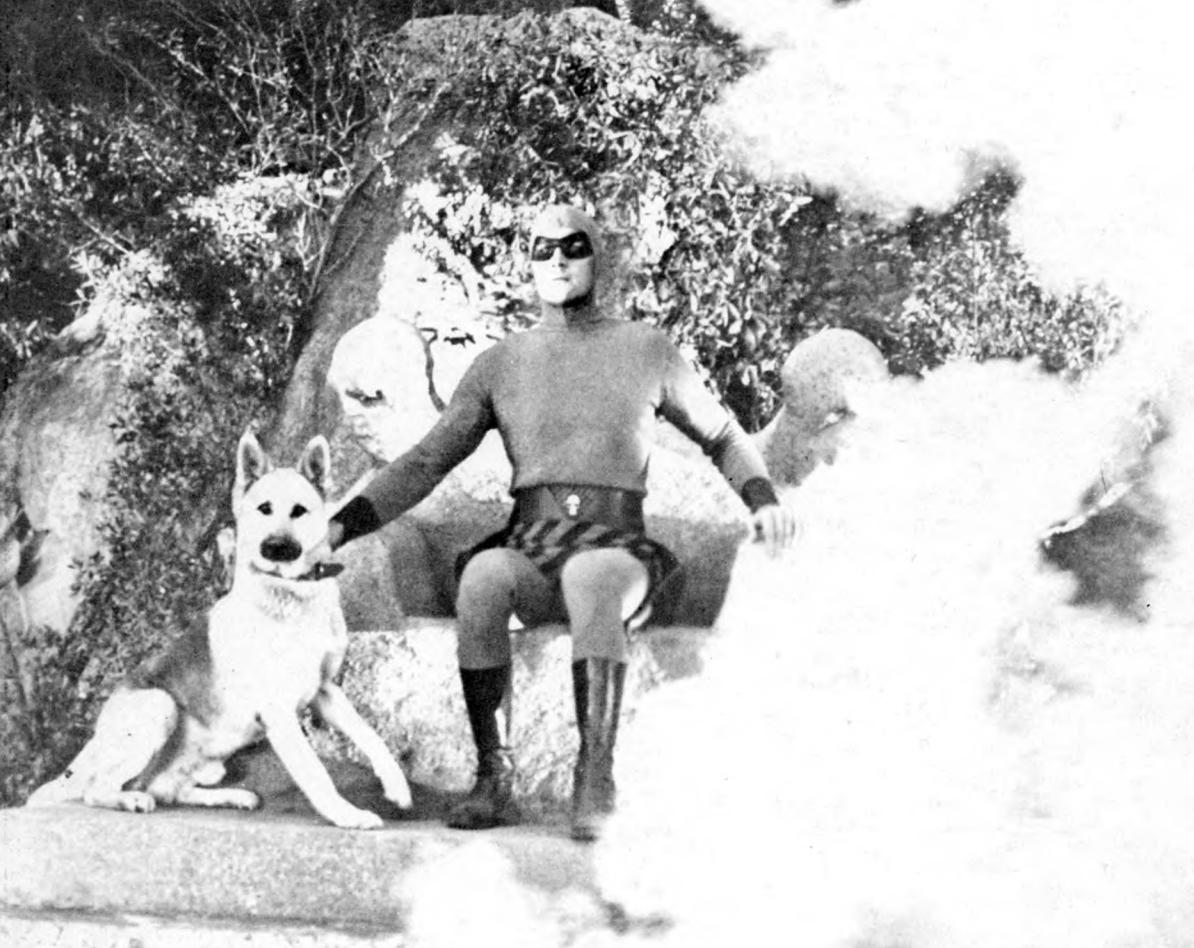


Cliffhanger

No. 4



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One of the Arab baddies is trying to get the best of Rod Cameron in this scene from Chapter 5 of the 1943 Republic serial **SECRET SERVICE IN DARKEST AFRICA**. [WOY Collection.]

ROD CAMERON

Serial Super-Hero

by Paul Dellinger

The Second World War was fought not only in Europe, Africa and Asia but on the silver screen, both in features and serials. Home-front audiences probably wondered, at least subconsciously, how we could ever have gotten along without the likes of John Wayne, Bogart, Mitchum, and company — not to mention Spy Smasher, Don Winslow of the Navy, Sgt. King of the Texas Rangers and the Northwest Mounted, Smilin' Jack, Rex Bennett....

Rex Bennett?

If the name doesn't ring a bell right off as a guardian of the free world, it's not surprising. Even Rod Cameron didn't recall it — and it was Cameron who played the role.

"No, it wasn't the same character," Cameron insisted, when the subject of who he played in his two serials came up at the 1983 Western Film Fair at

Charlotte, N.C. "The uniform was different."

He was right. In **G-MEN VS. THE BLACK DRAGON**, Bennett wore civilian clothes and, in **SECRET SERVICE IN DARKEST AFRICA**, he wore a military-looking uniform (which was rather a strange outfit for an American secret agent). Considering that both serials were made in 1943, each in a matter of weeks, and that both were early in Rod Cameron's screen career, it is understandable that he would not recall the similarity of names 40 years later.

But the character was the same, and it was a conscious decision on Republic's part. It is, in fact, the only time a character created solely in a serial — not from a book or comic strip, like *Zorro*, *Tarzan*, *Flash Gordon* or *Dick Tracy* — ever appeared in a follow-up serial.

G-MEN VS. THE BLACK DRAGON was made first and the hero of **SECRET SERVICE IN DARKEST**

SECRET SERVICE in DARKEST AFRICA

A REPUBLIC SERIAL in 15 CHAPTERS

Chapter 1

**NORTH AFRICA
INTRIGUE**



**ROD CAMERON
JOAN MARSH
DUNCAN RENALDO
LIONEL ROYCE**

*SPENCER BENNET-DIRECTOR
ORIGINAL SCREEN PLAY BY ROYAL COLE
BASIL DICKEY JESSE DUFFY
RONALD DAVIDSON JOSEPH O'DONNELL
JOSEPH POLAND*

A photo of the one sheet for Chapter One.



Rod Cameron and Duncan Renaldo (sans moustache) fight the villains in this scene from chapter 9 of the 1943 Republic serial **SECRET SERVICE IN DARKEST AFRICA**.

AFRICA was originally to be named "Lance Hamilton." But after Cameron was signed to play him, the writers decided to take advantage of the possible tie-in and have Rex Bennett return to the screen.

So Rod Cameron made serial history, but he was never to know it. The actor died in a Gainesville, Ga., hospital just five months after his visit to Charlotte. Not that he would have cared, probably, about his uniqueness among chapter-play heroes — he never seemed to take the movie-making business very seriously. He talked about his more than 140 movie appearances with a touch of humor. His favorite, he said, was never seen by audiences anywhere. It was when he did a screen-test with Ingrid Bergman to play opposite her in **FOR WHOM THE BELLS TOLL** (1943), the same year as his two serial appearances. The role, of course, went to Gary Cooper.

"I made all the tests with Ingrid Bergman. That was my greatest thrill," Cameron said in Charlotte.

He worked in a 1939 movie with Bette Davis and Miriam Hopkins, he recalled, and excitedly took his whole family to see it. "We sat through the whole thing, and I wasn't in it," he laughed. His part wound

up on the cutting-room floor.

After appearing in so many westerns, Cameron looked a bit different from his screen persona wearing glasses and sporting a tattoo on his left arm. But the six-foot-five actor's frame was unmistakable. Asked how he started in movies, he said, "Oh, I got hungry."

Born and raised in Calgary, Canada (his real name was Roderick Cox), he worked as a construction laborer and sandhog on the Holland Tunnel in New York. In the 1930s, he moved to Los Angeles to work on tunnels for the Metropolitan Water District. He later became a fertilizer salesman (an occupation he jokingly compared to being in movies) and broke into pictures as a stunt double for such stars as Buck Jones and Fred MacMurray. He appeared briefly in such movies as Cecil B. de Mille's **NORTHWEST MOUNTED POLICE** (1940) with Gary Cooper, Madeleine Carroll and Preston Foster, and **THE KANSAN** (1943) with Richard Dix, Jane Wyatt and Victor Jory. There was even a bit for him in **HENRY ALDRICH FOR PRESIDENT**.

Perhaps the two serials helped move him up to leading man status. Anyway, he became a western



Rod Cameron in a Nazi uniform gets ready to use the old swing on the chandelier to get the baddie trick in this scene from chapter 1 of the 1943 Republic serial **SECRET SERVICE IN DARKEST AFRICA**. [WOY Collection.]



The screenwriters for the 1943 Republic serial **SECRET SERVICE IN DARKEST AFRICA** must have been fans of Edgar Allan Poe's *The Pit and the Pendulum*. Rod Cameron is being setup for a similar torture in this scene from chapter 12. [WOY Collection.]

star at Universal, where Johnny Mack Brown had been in the saddle, joined toward the end of his Universal series by Tex Ritter. But Brown had moved to Monogram to team up with Raymond Hatton (still playing the "Sandy Hopkins" role he had been doing in the "Rough Riders" series with Buck Jones and Tim McCoy), and Tex Ritter would soon move to PRC to replace James Newill in the "Texas Rangers" series with Dave O'Brien and Guy Wilkerson. About all Universal had left was comedian Fuzzy Knight, who teamed with Cameron for many of the lanky cowboy's entries there — **BOSS OF BOOMTOWN, TRIGGER TRAIL, RIDERS OF SANTA FE, THE OLD TEXAS TRAIL, BEYOND THE PECOS, RENEGADES OF THE RIO GRANDE**, mostly made during 1944-45. He and Knight were joined by Yvonne DeCarlo and Andy Devine for **FRONTIER GAL** (1945). The Cameron-DeCarlo team also appeared that year in Universal's **SALOME, WHERE SHE DANCED**, which had more to do with Civil War spies than the wild west. Universal would team them yet again in 1948 for **RIVER LADY**, where he was a rugged lumberman and she a riverboat gambling queen. In 1947, Universal had co-starred him with

Maria Montez and Gilbert Roland (who once played the "Cisco Kid" as did Duncan Renaldo, Cameron's co-star in his second Rex Bennett serial) in **PIRATES OF MONTEREY**.

By then, Cameron had started appearing at other studios. 20th Century-Fox apparently liked him best as a villain, co-starring him in two George Montgomery vehicles. In **BELLE STARR'S DAUGHTER** (1948), although Cameron *looked* like the key character (he was decked out in a black outfit and sported a brace of pearl-handled pistols), he was playing the outlaw who murdered Belle Starr and her husband and tricked Belle's daughter (Ruth Roman) into believing the law had done it — until lawman Montgomery finally sets things right. (The picture was re-made in color years later as **THE OUTLAW'S DAUGHTER**, with Jim Davis and Bill Williams in the Montgomery and Cameron roles.) In **DAKOTA LIL**, Montgomery had a similar problem convincing title character Marie Windsor to forsake her outlaw ways along with outlaw Cameron who tries to kill her off before the picture ends. Cameron would not be so nasty again until Republic's **SANTA FE PASSAGE** (1955), where he tries to win lovely Faith Domergue



1295-EP-5-3

Rod Cameron fights with one of the Arabs in this scene from Chapter 5 of the 1943 Republic serial **SECRET SERVICE IN DARKEST AFRICA**. [WOY Collection.]



Rod Cameron and Duncan Renaldo have the villains covered in this scene from Chapter 13 of the 1943 serial **SECRET SERVICE IN DARKEST AFRICA**. [WOY Collection.]

from hero John Payne — and even in that one, he dies a hero's death, sacrificing himself to give Payne and Domergue time to flee from rampaging Indians. The picture was directed by serial veteran William Witney, who first directed Cameron in **G-MEN VS. THE BLACK DRAGON**, and the fight between Payne and Cameron (or their stunt doubles) toward the end of the picture definitely has Witney's stamp on it.

Allied Artists gave Cameron some dandy vehicles, including **PANHANDLE** (1948), where reformed gun-fighter Cameron buckles on his brother's pistols to avenge his brother's death at the hands of a gang headed by Reed Hadley, an early serial "Zorro." An article supposedly written by Cameron — one of a series supposedly written by various stars in the 1940s — dealt with **PANHANDLE** and said Cameron's character was supposed to die in the end, but a sneak preview audience disapproved so much that the ending was altered.

Cameron not only disclaimed authorship of the article, he said no alternate ending was filmed. So much for Hollywood hype.

But director Lesley Selander did convey a feeling of doom that seemed to hang over Cameron's

character in **PANHANDLE**, symbolizing it by constant references to an approaching rainstorm (Hadley has warned Cameron to be gone before rain starts to fall). The story seems to put aside any romance between supposed heroine Cathy Downs — but Cameron winds up falling for, and being rescued at the last minute by, Hadley's ex-girl friend, Anne Gwynne, who tosses him a pistol from an upper floor at a crucial moment. Cameron's character, "Johnny Sands," is also being hunted by the law for past mistakes but the audience is led to believe he will get off lightly for ridding the territory of Hadley's gang, including one young punk gunsel played by none other than Blake Edwards, who also had a hand in the screenplay. The last we see of Cameron, with Gwynne watching along with us, is him walking into the rainy night singing, "*Oh, the preacher went down in the cellar to pray; but he got drunk, and he stayed all day . . .*" The tune is the same as "*Come on, Momma, and go my bail,*" and eases in and out of the picture. It's a rather strange picture, but full of action and well worth seeing.

Cameron's other Allied Artists movies were, if anything, even more full of action. They also had the



Joan Marsh flashes Rod Cameron a big smile in this scene from Chapter 8 of the 1943 Republic serial **SECRET SERVICE IN DARKEST AFRICA**. [WOY Collection.]



Rod Cameron grapples with one of the villains in this scene from Chapter 14 of the 1943 Republic serial **SECRET SERVICE IN DARKEST AFRICA**. [WOY Collection.]

virtue of co-starring Cameron with none other than Johnny Mack Brown, on loan from Monogram and who Cameron had succeeded in a Universal B-western series. (Cameron had been succeeded at Universal by none other than Kirby Grant, the future *Sky King*.)

In both **STAMPEDE** (again with Blake Edwards as co-scripter) and **SHORT GRASS** (with Cathy Downs once more), Cameron is a two-gun man of action and Brown is the local sheriff — a straight shooter, even though he manages to get wounded both times. The two films were made in 1949 and 1950, respectively.

If Cameron's western work at Allied Artists has any real competition, it is his work in Republic westerns — again, filled with action. In **THE PLUNDERERS** (1948), Cameron is an undercover lawman who infiltrates a gang led by Forrest Tucker. The two men become friends, to the point that, when Cameron is exposed, Tucker loads the shells backwards in a gun to give him a chance to escape. He does escape and wins Ilona Massey in the end; Tucker fares less well, losing his girl (Adrian Booth) to the Indians and finally sacrificing himself in the same way Cameron would later do in **SANTA FE**

PASSAGE.

In 1949, Cameron led Republic's band of Texas Rangers (Guinn "Big Boy" Williams and others) against an outlaw gang led by Walter Brennan in **BRIMSTONE**. Others in the cast included Booth and Tucker, Jack Holt, Jim Davis and James Brown. **OH, SUSANNA** (1951) had Cameron and Tucker as good and bad cavalry officers and Booth as the woman with a not-so-good background who they both love. The story involves the cavalry trying to keep renegade whites from mining gold in the Black Hills Indian reservation. Republic must have liked Cameron and Tucker as rival cavalry officers; they reprised those character-types in **SAN ANTONE** (1935).

Meanwhile, another minor gem came out from Republic in 1952 — **RIDE THE MAN DOWN**, in which Cameron is foreman on a ranch run by Ella Raines (a role similar to the one she did in John Wayne's **TALL IN THE SADDLE**). She is engaged to Forrest Tucker, but it's clear early on that she and Cameron were made for each other and Tucker is being his usual villainous self, anyway (this was before **ROCK ISLAND TRAIL** moved him up to leading man roles).



1795-Ep-10-6 A

The eagle emblem on Rod Cameron's pseudo uniform reminds us of the Marines emblem in this scene from Chapter 10 of the 1943 Republic serial **SECRET SERVICE IN DARKEST AFRICA**. [WOY Collection.]



Rod Cameron and the head henchman fight it out in this scene from Chapter 14 of the 1943 Republic serial **SECRET SERVICE IN DARKEST AFRICA**. [WOY Collection.]

The veteran cast included Chill Wills as a ranch hand, Brian Donlevy as one of the bad guys, J. Carroll Naish as the sheriff who shoots Donlevy down after Donlevy plugs him in the back (as Johnny Mack Brown was doing over at Allied Artists in Cameron's movies), Jim Davis as the head of a band of rustlers, along with regulars Douglas Kennedy and Roy Barcroft. Joe Kane directed, and did it well.

Republic updated Cameron and Chill Wills to a modern western in 1954, **HELL'S OUTPOST**, in which Jeeps replaced horses and villainous John Russell tried to jump their mining claims. Cameron and Jim Davis teamed up in Monogram's **CAVALRY SCOUT** (1951), and Cameron starred the following year in Allied Artists' **FORT OSAGE**. In 1954, he played Lt. Edward Beale in a drama involving Beale's mission to introduce camels to the cavalry in desert country in United Artists' **SOUTHWEST PASSAGE**.

By 1953, Cameron had moved to television. His first series, lasting through 65 episodes into 1955, was **City Detective** in which he played two-fisted Lt. Bart Grant. In **State Trooper**, which ran 104 episodes from 1956 to 1959 (having started as a pilot film in 1956 on NBC's **Star Stage** anthology series), he

played Rod Blake, chief investigator with the Nevada state police. The series was supposed to be based on actual Nevada police files. Both series were syndicated. His last series, **Coronado 9**, was more of the same.

By the 1960s, Cameron was less active on the big screen. Producer Alex Gordon put him in a couple of westerns which had little virtue other than bringing together some old-timers from better film days. **THE BOUNTY KILLER** had Dan Duryea as a man brought in his wanted man by shooting them in the back with a shotgun, often as not. Released in 1965 as an Embassy production, it even had Buster Crabbe in a nasty role and Cameron's old Allied Artists partner, Johnny Mack Brown, in a small part as an over-the-hill sheriff.

REQUIEM FOR A GUNFIGHTER (also 1965) elevated Cameron to the title role and surrounded him again with Brown, Raymond Hatton, Tim McCoy, Stephen McNally, Dick Jones, Bob Steele, Brian Donlevy and others. It was almost a B-western reunion. Cameron had also had a brief role as a sheriff in Allied Artists' **GUN HAWK**, starring Rory Calhoun and Rod Lauren, in 1963. He did some



Rod Cameron has just parachuted into action in this scene from the 1943 Republic serial **SECRET SERVICE IN DARKEST AFRICA**. [WOY Collection.]



Rod Cameron into action in this scene from the final chapter of the 1943 Republic serial **SECRET SERVICE IN DARKEST AFRICA**. [WOY Collection.]

westerns overseas, about which he would only say "They have the worst stuntmen in the world." In one, he played Pat Garrett, a role which would seem to suit him, but the movie took liberties with history, having Billy the Kid killed by Indians rather than by Garrett.

"I had my nose broken eight times," Cameron chuckled, asked if he'd ever had any injuries during his rugged fights and other screen activities. He also sustained a broken shoulder, not to mention broken toes — mainly from horses stepping on them. "That's about all," he said.

"We used to do 25 pages of dialogue and three or four fistfights a day when we made those films," he said of his early career. "We'd make a whole movie in eight days and, today, some of these actors say, 'Oh, two pages of dialogue, I can't possibly do that in one day.' "

He didn't see himself as retired in July, 1983, saying he was ready to act again if someone offered him a role. He and Don Barry had appeared on the same episodes of TV's **Adam 12** police series once, although in separate parts of the story.

Some of the old Fawcett Comics featuring

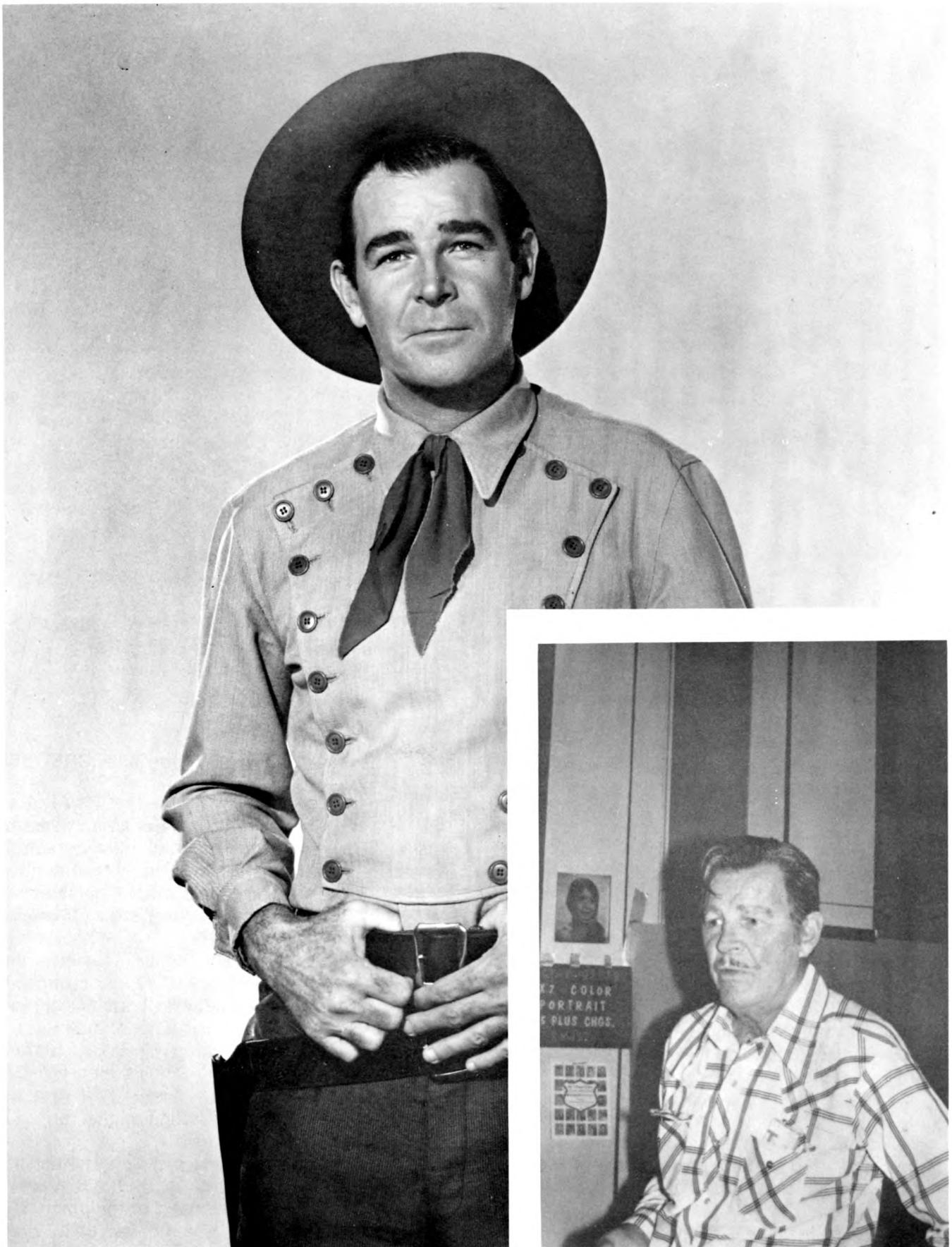
"Rocky" Lane, "Lash" LaRue, "Hopalong" Cassidy and various other screen heroes were on sale at Charlotte — including western stories featuring one Rod Cameron! "My son reads them," he said. "He falls apart at some of the dialogue....'Fork yer bronc, Hank!'" he mimiced.

Cameron once had all his comics. Fawcett would send him an issue each month. Not knowing that some of them would someday be worth \$45 or more to collectors, he threw them all out. "That was the closest he ever came to getting murdered," his wife said.

"She could have killed me. Well, I could have killed myself," he laughed, reflecting on their prices in the dealers' room.

Cameron said his serial starring status helped him get his bump in salary from the studio. He said he and the rest of the cast did most of their own fight sequences. Actors used to doing maybe 10 or 12 setups a day now don't believe him, he said, when he talks in terms of doing 110 or more.

"You don't shoot anything in sequence," he remembered about the serials, but he found the experience good. "There's no better school in the



Rod Cameron in western garb at height of his popularity in the early 50's. **Inset:** Rod in 1976 at the Mid-Winter Western Film Festival at Orlando, Florida. [Both WOY Collection.]

world."

In **G-MEN VS. THE BLACK DRAGON** (also released in feature form as **BLACK DRAGON OF MAN-ZANAR** in 1943), Rex Bennett (Cameron) is joined by British agent Vivian Marsh (Constance Worth) and Chang Sing (Roland Got) of the Chinese secret service to track down the Japanese Black Dragon Society and stop its terrorism, assassination and sabotage in this country. The society is headed by Oyama Haruchi (Nino Pipitone), who is smuggled into the United States in a crate supposedly containing a mummy (he uses a drug to induce suspended animation). His lieutenants are Ranga (Noel Cravat) and Lugo (George J. Lewis), and the trios engage in one bruising battle after another.

Chapter one ends with Rex and Chang battling it out with the villains in a warehouse, while Vivian is about to be roasted inside a locker coated with a flammable chemical. The heroes free her and escape just before the building is thoroughly Lydeckerized (a word invented by serial fan Jody McGhee of High Point, North Carolina). Howard Lydecker handled the special effects solo on this serial, and his continuous chain of explosions demolishing that building must be seen to be believed. When you think there is nothing left to blow up, there is still another explosion.

Haruchi uses a black raven as an occasional weapon, tipping its beak with poison. The bird reforms in the final scene, after Haruchi and company have been killed off, and displays an American flag to show his true colors.

Some of the cliffhangers make audiences sit up and take notice. One of them has Vivian tied to a chair as a spear-cannon is about to go off in front of her. The audiences sees the spear launched, and its tip coming through the back of the chair. (Rex had managed to slash the strap holding Vivian's neck and head in place so she could avoid the spear, we learn the following week.)

Whether intentional or not, Chang brings laughs from audiences as he delivers Charlie Chan-like lines: "From the Japanese, always expect the unexpected," or, "When one claw is removed from the Black Dragon, two others grow." The usual reaction is for Rex and Vivian to glance at each other with expressions that seem to say: "What the heck is he talking about?"

In the final chapter, when Rex is about to be beheaded by Haruchi's sword while in captivity, there is a surge of patriotism. "What you do to me isn't important," Rex tells his captors. "There'll still be 130 million Americans who'll never quit until they have taken care of you and your entire nation."

"American big talk," Haruchi responds. "Japan will finish off your navy, will destroy your army, and will dictate her terms in the White House."

"Tell it to the Marines," snorts Rex.

Rescued in the nick of time, Rex and Haruchi battle in a motorboat headed for an enemy submarine.

Rex dives clear but Haruchi is killed when the boat hits the sub and goes up in a Lydecker explosion.

Having done his bit against the Japanese, Rex turns to battling the Germans in **SECRET SERVICE IN DARKEST AFRICA**. As in the earlier serial, he is the focal point of a trio of heroes — or two heroes and one heroine. This time his partners are Pierre LaSalle (Duncan Renaldo forsaking his traditional Spanish accent for French) and journalist Janet Blake (Joan Marsh). Lionel Royce plays Nazi leader Von Rommler as well as Arab leader Abou Ben Ali who he captures in chapter one and impersonates throughout the rest of the serial.

Writers on the first serial had been Ronald Davidson, William Lively, Joseph O'Donnell and Joseph Poland. For **SECRET SERVICE**, O'Donnell, Poland and Davidson were joined by Royal Cole and Basil Dickey. The writers tried at least once to tie the two serials together. In **SECRET SERVICE**, Rex was supposed to mention a Japanese drug causing suspended animation, which he remembered Oyama Haruchi, chief of the Black Dragon Society, using to smuggle himself into the United States. Unfortunately, the sentence in which Haruchi was to be mentioned was cut.

The other villains are Ernst Muller (Kurt Kreuger), supposedly Abou Ben Ali's aide but actually working for Von Rommler; Wolfe (Frederic Brunn), an action heavy who seems to take real delight in his nefarious schemes, and Luger (Sigurd Tor).

Abou Ben Ali is kept alive in a dungeon-like room below the office where Von Rommler is impersonating him. Each week, chained to the wall, Abou Ben Ali hears how Rex Bennett has again frustrated a Nazi scheme and gloats aloud about it, even though it usually means that he gets slapped around some more by his captors. By the final chapters, he is pretty bedraggled. Von Rommler has him shot, believing Rex and his friends will assume that Abou Ben Ali was a double-agent all the time. But the Arab has the last laugh. He survives the gunshot wound, and sets Rex on the trail of the man who had been impersonating him all this time.

When we first hear of Rex Bennett in chapter one, he is described as having been killed at Stalingrad while helping the Russians fight the Germans. Then we switch to Germany where Rex is in a Nazi uniform, having successfully infiltrated the ranks and learned of a plan to substitute documents in an ancient Moslem tomb to make it seem as though an ancient Moslem leader had called for support of the Germans by the Arabs. Rex's disguise is revealed and he has to fight his way out by sword. After finishing off his German adversary, he rams his sword into a picture of Hitler on the wall and leaves for the air field to fly to Casablanca. Resuming his disguise as a Nazi on a flying mission, Rex leaves a souvenir with the officer who helps him ready his plane. After Rex takes off, the officer examines his souvenir — a medallion with the inscription, "God

Bless America." James Bond couldn't have pulled off an escape with more dash and bravado.

Mort Glickman got musical credit in both serials, but the music seems more original (and louder) in the second one. It seems that the French national anthem is exploding onto the soundtrack every few minutes, as the outside of French Diplomatic Headquarters (which becomes Rex's base of operation) is shown. In fact, it seems that the music, with its overtones of French and German themes, owes something to the Bogart-Bergman movie, *CASABLANCA* (including the serial locale), which had come out the previous year.

Another bit of music worthy of note is that occurring each time the furniture in Abou Ben Ali's office moves aside on its mechanized track to reveal the underground lair where the real Arab leader is imprisoned. It sounds like nothing so much as the theme from *JAWS*.

William Witney gave his actionful direction to the first serial, while the second represented Spencer Bennet's first serial direction at Republic. Bennet may have been trying for something a little different, or so it seemed in the fight scenes. There were a lot of closeups, with the blows coming right at the screen as would be the trademark of future 3-D films.

There is much to be said for Rod Cameron's two serial assignments — more, even, than the actor realized himself. Long live Rex Bennett! —PD

ACTION-PACKED CLIFFHANGERS

Following is a list of the stations that have purchased the South Carolina Educational Television series in alphabetical order by call letters.

KMTF Fresno, CA
KNCT Killeen, TX
KOAP Portland, OR
KOZK Springfield, MO
KUAC Fairbanks, AK
KUHT Houston, TX
KVCR San Bernardino, CA
KYUK Bethel, AK
WCTE Cookville, TN
WDCN Nashville, TN
WGVC Grand Rapids, MI
WIPB Muncie, IN
WITF Hershey, PA
WLVT Allentown, PA
WMVS Milwaukee, WI
WNEO Alliance, OH
WNMU Marquette, MI
WSWP Beckley, WV
WTVS Detroit, MI
WUFT Gainesville, FL
WUSF Tampa, FL
WVIA Scranton, PA

IN OUR MAIL

August 15, 1983

Dear Ron and Linda,

This isn't a weekly event, but I just got back from the Holiday Inn, Rivermont in Memphis, Tennessee where they were holding the Memphis Film Festival. As for serials, they were showing the following: DRUMS OF FU MANCHU, DICK TRACY, THE INVISIBLE MONSTER, G-MEN NEVER FORGET, GORDON OF GHOST CITY and GUNFIGHTERS OF THE NORTHWEST. They were either running all the chapters at once or divided it up over a 3 day period. I even met a couple of the stars, Clayton Moore of G-MNF and GOTHW and Richard Webb of TIM. They even showed a couple of episodes of Mr. Webb's series Captain Midnight. Although it's corny by today's standards, it's still entertaining.

Other stars appearing were: Henry Brandon of DOFM, Iron Eyes Cody, Jock Mahoney of GOTNW, John Agar and surprisingly Susan Oliver. All in all, it was an exciting experience.

Having finished the first edition of Cliffhanger, I found your coverage of THE PURPLE MONSTER STRIKES interesting. However, in trying to point out errors on film, you overlooked in ep. 11 when Craig, escaping the deathtrap found a blank piece of paper with an imprint on it. In the presence of the disguised Dr. Layton, he took a pencil sharpener off its handle and shook the shavings on the paper to make out Benjamin's name. Then Craig put the container back on the handle loosely, but in the next frame, it appears refixed with out either Craig or Layton readjusting it.

Also in ep. 1, you said either Dennis Moore or his double was a good fighter. Well, it was his double, Dale Van Sickel. Since Tom Steele doubled for Geary, it made the scale appear a bit more balanced in the fights. Another thing, you didn't credit Van Sickel as the ambulance driver in ep. 9.

I look forward to next edition. Keep up the good work.

Sincerely,
William Q. Deverell
152 Carlton Avenue
Jersey City, NJ 07306

Dear William,

Thanks for the comments.

QUESTIONS ABOUT YESTERDAY
by Anthony Ross

Q. What's the birthdate of Eddie Quillan? What sound serial did he star in? Liz Watson, Pennsylvania.

A. He was in two sound serials: JUNGLE QUEEN and MYSTERY OF THE RIVER BOAT. I think he had a small role in a silent serial also. —AR



Tom Tyler as the Phantom is deep in thought as Devil played Ace, the Wonder Dog waits patiently in this scene from the 1943 Columbia serial, **THE PHANTOM**. [WOY Collection.]

THE PHANTOM

by Stormy Weathers

Throughout the history of the B-Western there have been many "could have beens" — actors who with better guidance, better direction, a better studio, and a bit more luck might have risen to the top. There were many capable cowboys who spent their entire careers battling the odds and attempting to hurdle the obstacles placed in their trails. Kermit Maynard, Lane Chandler, Bob Baker, Bob Allen, Fred Scott, Russell Hayden, Wally Wales, Rex Bell, Lee Powell, Dave O'Brien, all deserved a better hand than they were dealt.

The best example of a classic case of misused talent, however, might be Tom Tyler. It is true that his career as a star and his popularity surpassed that of the above cowpokes, but it is also true that he deserved a much better fate than he received. He was big, handsome, and though it is hard to discern

in an inept disaster such as **PINTO RUSTLERS** (Reliable, 1936), he was a good actor. Sometimes it is hard to believe that the Tom Tyler in **PINTO RUSTLERS** is the same Tom Tyler that one saw in **POWDERSMOKE RANGE** (RKO) a year earlier, or in **THE LAST OUTLAW** (RKO) in the same year, or later in **CHEYENNE** (Warner Brothers, 1947).

Tyler's career was characterized by more twists and turns and ups and downs than a roller coaster ride. He began with a class studio, sank to the lowest depths with the poorest of independent companies, occasionally re-surfaced to give good one-shot performances in RKO specials, finished his series days with the best B-Western factory of them all, Republic, and later developed into a talented and much sought after character actor. Through it all he was a popular serial star — and the genre saved his career on more than one occasion.



Above: Jeanne Bates, Tom Tyler and Frank Shannon in a publicity photo for the 1943 Columbia serial **THE PHANTOM**. **On the Front Cover:** Tom Tyler and Ace, the Wonder Dog sit on the skull throne in another publicity photo from the same serial. [Both WOY Collection.]



Tom Tyler as the Phantom rules from the skull throne and settles a dispute in this scene from Chapter 1 of the 1943 Columbia serial **THE PHANTOM**. [WOY Collection.]

THE PHANTOM OF THE WEST, 1925-35

Born Vincent Markowski in Port Henry, New York in 1903, reared in Hamtramck, Michigan, the future cowboy star arrived in Hollywood in 1924 where his career in films began as a stuntman and extra in movies such as **BEN HUR** (1924) and **LEATHERSTOCKING** (1924).

The tall muscular weightlifter must have made an immediate impression (and must have learned how to ride a horse) as just a year later he starred in the silent Western feature, **LETS GO GALLAGHER** (FBO). It was almost as though it was too easy for Tyler. For at the very outset he found himself in the employee of one of the class studios specializing in Western films. In many respects the apex of his career had already been reached; he would be forced to pay his dues later — time after time.

Among FBO's other stars were Fred Thomson, Bob Steele, Bob Custer, Buzz Barton, and, after leaving Fox, Tom Mix.

Tyler was employed by the studio from 1925 to 1929 and during those years starred in twenty-eight silent Westerns.

In the transitional years between the silent and sound eras Tyler found himself working for an outfit called Syndicate, which had roots in the old Rayart Organization, and which would later evolve into Monogram. In 1930 he starred in eight Westerns for the studio — some of which were released with music and/or sound effects. The studio's other principal star was Bob Steele; it was not the first, nor last time the two cowboys would encounter each other on the same movie trail.

Tyler experienced little personal difficulty in making the transition from the silent to the sound era. Don Miller wrote in *Hollywood Corral* (Popular Library, 1976) that Tyler possessed a number of attributes that helped him to make the transition:

Tyler was huge, and he wore this gigantic ten-gallon hat that made him even taller. . . . It would be the blight of Tom Tyler's career, in one opinion, that he never received the care and attention he needed, and merited, to become a top-ranking cowboy star. Like Bob Steele, Tyler was unique, but his stronger



Tom Tyler, Ace and Ernie Adams study something in the skull cave in this publicity photo for the 1943 Columbia serial **THE PHANTOM**. [WOY Collection.]



Kenneth MacDonald and Frank Shannon look concerned at a stubborn Tom Tyler while Jeanne Bates looks off camera in this publicity photo for the 1943 Columbia serial **THE PHANTOM**. [WOY Collection.]

qualities were not so immediately apparent, and ran deeper. As mentioned, he was imposing in appearance. His acting was restrained, and more than satisfactory even in the most desperately inept situations, and he would have more than his share of them. The intriguing thing about Tyler was his somewhat sinister attitude, underlined by piercing eyes and a deep but repressed speaking voice, as if the sounds were coming from the shadows. More than any other range hero, Tyler gave the impression of tensile, quiet menace — that if he were on the prod for an adversary, that bad one's fate would not be a pleasant one to witness. Oddly enough, Tyler was not adept with the punches, and it was usually a disappointment to see Tom fanning the villain to slumber, when it was expected that he would break him like a matchstick.

Tyler made his all-talking debut in 1930 when he starred in a ten-chapter Mascot serial, **THE PHAN-**

TOM OF THE WEST, the first of seven serials he would eventually star in. It was also one of several instances in which Tyler starred in a picture with the word "phantom" in the title. They were: **PHANTOM OF THE RANGE** (FBO, 1928); **THE PHANTOM OF THE WEST** (Mascot, serial, 1930); **PHANTOM OF THE AIR** (Universal, serial, 1933); **THE PHANTOM OF THE RANGE** (Victory, 1936); **THE PHANTOM PLAINSMAN** (Republic, 1942); and, inevitably, I suppose, **THE PHANTOM** (Columbia, serial, 1943).

THE PHANTOM OF THE WEST, produced by serial king Nat Levine and directed by Ross Lederman, featured in support of the star, Dorothy Gulliver, William Desmond, Tom Santschi, and Ernie Adams, as well as noted stunt performers, Joe Bonomo and Kermit Maynard. It was the first of many Mascot serials to feature a masked villain, suspected at one time or another to be just about every character in the story. Although the serial didn't develop into anything approaching blockbuster status it did serve to add impetus to Tyler's career by proving he possessed the necessary qualities to make the transition to sound films.



Tom Tyler protects Jeanne Bates in this publicity photo for the 1943 Columbia serial **THE PHANTOM**. [WOY Collection.]



Sitting on the skull throne Tom Tyler administers justice to the natives. Obviously the screenwriters chose to ignore Lee Falk's pygmy tribe which protected and helped the Phantom in comics and paperback books in this scene from Chapter 1 of the 1943 Columbia serial **THE PHANTOM**. [WOY Collection.]

Shortly thereafter Tyler made his all-talking Western feature debut in Syndicate's **WEST OF CHEYENNE** (1931). He was supported in the film by one of the early Western comedic actors, Ben Corbett, soon to be the sidekick of Jack Perrin and others, and one of the genre's stalwart villains, Harry Woods. The film was produced and directed by Harry S. Webb, who played an important, and largely detrimental, role in Tyler's career.

In the same year Tyler starred in two more sound features for Syndicate: **GOD'S COUNTRY AND THE MAN**, featuring George (later "Gabby") Hayes, Betty Mack, and Al Bridge; and **RIDERS OF THE PLAINS** with Jack Perrin, young Andy Shuford (later Bill Cody's co-star), Slim Whitaker, and once again, gravel-voiced Al Bridge. Both were directed by the ubiquitous J.P. McCarthy, who had directed Tyler, Steele, and many others in silent features, and who continued his career well into the sound era.

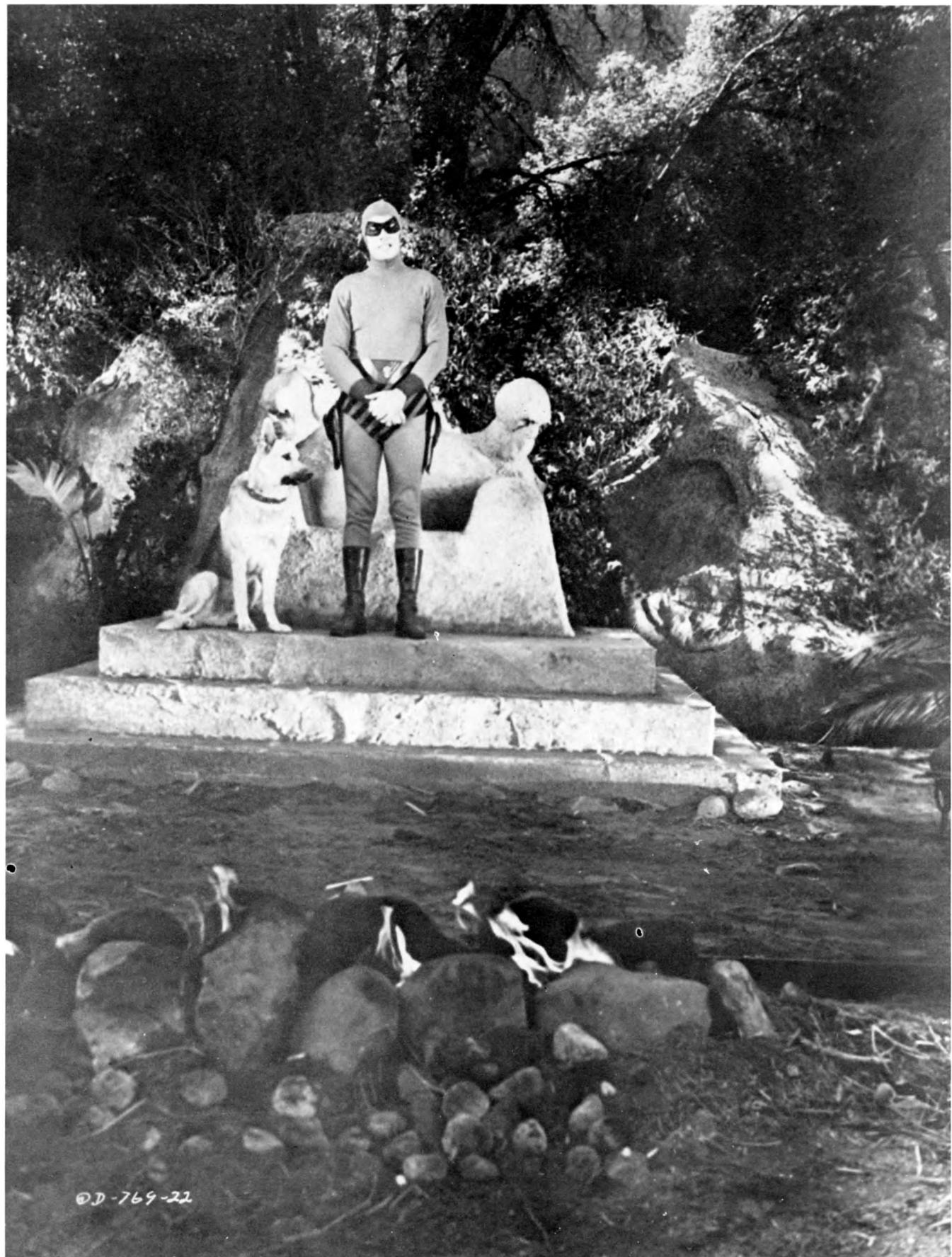
Tyler's successful effort in **THE PHANTOM OF THE WEST** resulted in his signing a contract with the brand new Monogram company which evolved out of Syndicate. The studio also signed former silent star Bill Cody at the same time, and later pro-

duced good series during the early and mid-'30's with Bob Steele, Rex Bell, and John Wayne.

In 1931-32 Tyler starred in eight Monogram entries, four of which were produced by Trem Carr at the same time that he was producing Steele Westerns for Tiffany, and later, World Wide.

Many of the films in Tyler's Monogram series were characterized by slightly offbeat stories and this was especially true of the initial entry, **PARTNERS OF THE TRAIL**, directed by Wallace Fox. The story didn't sound much like a Western and it featured Reginald Sheffield (father of Johnny "Bomba of the Jungle" Sheffield) in a role that was nearly equal in importance to that of Tyler. It featured no villains, but dealt with the hero being accused of killing his wife, and in a strong strain of mysticism, featured a dramatic prison cell scene of the hero slowly going berserk. But then Monogram Westerns of the early and mid-'30's, especially those starring Tyler, and later, John Wayne, who starred in several remakes of the Tyler Monograms, were generally characterized by unusually strong, if not always successful, plots.

The Tyler and Wayne series, like most Monogram



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Ace, the Wonder Dog, and Tom Tyler in another publicity photo showing the skull throne from the 1943 Columbia serial, **THE PHANTOM**. [WOY Collection.]



John S. Bagni poses with Ace, the Wonder Dog, and Tom Tyler in this scene from Chapter 3 of the 1943 Columbia serial **THE PHANTOM**. [WOY Collection.]

series that followed, however, suffered a similar fate; it seemed the studio was willing to expend the necessary funds to launch a series but, once established, would later begin to cut corners. Two other Monogram series that went through those stages immediately come to mind — Jack Randall and the Rough Riders.

In 1930 Tim McCoy had starred in his first all-talking Western when he was cast in the lead in **THE INDIANS ARE COMING** (Universal), supposedly based on a story by William F. "Buffalo Bill" Cody. Coincidentally, it was also the first all-talking serial. The serial was a big money-maker and propitiously gave the Western a sorely needed shot of adrenalin and generally elevated the status of serials.

The following year Universal attempted to duplicate its success by starring McCoy in another Cowboy and Indian serial opus, **BATTLING WITH BUFFALO BILL**. Fortunately for Tom Tyler the colonel signed a contract with Columbia and was not available; Tyler, in the midst of his Monogram series, was substituted in the title role. Despite a strong supporting cast (Rex Bell, Lucile Browne, William Desmond, Francis Ford, Yak Canutt, Jim Thorpe, Ed

Cobb, Fred Humes, Bud Osborne, Joe Bonomo, Art Mix, Franklyn Farnum) and a fair director, Ray Taylor, the twelve-chapter serial did not approach the popularity of its predecessor, but it did make money, which helps to explain why Tyler eventually starred in three more Universal serials.

The popularity of his serials and his good Monogram series, however, did not prevent Tyler from plummeting to the absolute depths of the celluloid Western world. In 1932-33 he toiled for one of the lowest of low-echelon poverty row organizations, John R. Freuler's Monarch company.

Tyler's move to Monarch had been precipitated by Monogram's signing of Bob Steele and Rex Bell; as a result, neither the contracts of Tyler or Bill Cody were renewed.

Toiling for Monarch is overstating the situation since Tyler appeared in only four films for Freuler during that period. The lack of activity, however, probably was an advantage to the tall cowpoke since the films were less than mediocre and did nothing substantively to advance his career. The pedestrian efforts were directed by the two J.P.'s: McCarthy (the first) and McGowan (the last three).



Just so you can see what Tom Tyler looks like without the Phantom mask we run this publicity photo for one of his westerns. [WOY Collection.]



Tom Tyler shows Kenneth MacDonald a knife, as Frank Shannon and Joe Delin look on in this scene from the 1943 Columbia serial **THE PHANTOM**. [WOY Collection.]

Tyler's lack of activity in features is partially explainable by the fact that during this time, and it probably saved his career, he starred in three of four consecutively produced Universal serials. Evidently he had made a favorable impression in **BATTLING WITH BUFFALO BILL**. None of the three was a Western, though one was a mountie story. They were: **JUNGLE MYSTERY** (1932); **CLANCY OF THE MOUNTED** (1933); and **THE PHANTOM OF THE AIR** (1933).

Of the three, the mountie story, **CLANCY OF THE MOUNTED**, ostensibly based on a Robert Service poem, was the best of the lot — and certainly the supporting cast was superior. It included Jacqueline Wells (Julie Bishop), William Desmond, Francis Ford, Tom London, Ed Cobb, and Fred Humes. Ray Taylor was again the director.

In 1934-36 Tyler, after leaving Freuler, hooked on with the Reliable organization (which it certainly wasn't) and, consequently, continued his downward slide.

Reliable was the company of Harry S. Webb and Bernard B. Ray. Before forming Reliable, Ray and Webb had headed, in association with John R.

Freuler, an outfit which called itself Big 4 (which it certainly wasn't).

At Big 4 Webb inaugurated his sound career by directing Jack Perrin in three features in 1930. The following year found him directing Buffalo Bill, Jr. and Tom Tyler, including, as earlier mentioned, Tyler's sound feature debut at Syndicate.

Ray, on the other hand, began his directorial career in 1934 by directing and producing the Bud 'n' Ben series, which was distributed concurrently with Tyler's Reliable series. Ben was Ben Corbett and Bud was usually the veteran and former silent star, Jack Perrin, but occasionally it was somebody else, i.e., Wally Wales, Fred Humes, Dennis Moore. Reliable was also responsible for Perrin entries, other than the Bud 'n' Ben series, as well as several Bob Custer and Rin-Tin-Tin productions.

Reliable's primary asset, however, was Tom Tyler, who starred in eighteen features for them in 1934-36. Ray and Webb alternated as director and producer for the series as they later did at Metropolitan, which they formed in 1939 out of the ashes of Reliable. At Metropolitan, by the way, their only star was Bob Steele, which was a good indication that his star



Tom Tyler was extremely athletic and could handle the arduous activity required of a serial star as can be seen in this scene from chapter 14 of the 1943 Columbia serial **THE PHANTOM**. [WOY Collection.]

was descending at that point in his career.

When Metropolitan died a merciful death, after only one year of existence, Webb concluded his career in 1940 by directing six Jack Randalls for Monogram. Ray completed his career by producing a Dennis Moore vehicle (Ziehm, 1941), directing one with Richard Arlen (Jack Schwarz Productions, 1947), directing and producing one with, of all people, country music star Ernest Tubb (Screen Guild, 1947), and, in his last effort, directing and co-producing **BUFFALO BILL IN TOMAHAWK TERRITORY** (Jack Schwarz Productions, 1952), which starred Clayton Moore.

Tyler's first release for Reliable was **MYSTERY RANCH** with Jack Perrin, taking time off from the previously mentioned Bud 'n' Ben series, but billed as Jack Gable. Evidently the old range rider was not proud of his work during this period because in the same year he starred in a Principal entry under the name of Richard Terry. Perrin's penchant for using several names may have resulted from his association with Ray and Webb. Ray produced the Principal film under the name of B.B. Ray, while directing as Ray Bernard. In a later Tyler entry, **RIO RATTLER**,

B.B. Ray produced while directing as Franklin Shamray, which probably summed up his feelings toward the film. Webb, too, often used an alias and, in fact, directed two Tyler entries as Henri Samuels.

Despite its many shortcomings the Tyler series did sport good supporting casts, as exemplified by **THE SILVER BULLET**, which included Charles King, Lafe McKee, Slim Whitaker, Franklyn Farnum, George Chesebro, Lew Meehan, Hank Bell, and Walt Williams. Walt Williams was in reality Wally Wales, later Hal Taliferro. Poor Wally, who earlier in his career had acted under the name of Floyd Alderson (his real name) and Floyd Taliaferro (Taliaferro was his middle name), seemed to have been as confused as Perrin, Webb, and Ray.

A REFRESHING PAUSE AT RKO, 1935-36

In the midst of Tyler's series of cheap quickies at Reliable he was featured in RKO's all-star special, **POWDERSMOKE RANGE** (1935). The film starred Harry Carey, Hoot Gibson, and Guinn "Big Boy" Williams as the Three Mesquiteers and featured, in addition to Tyler, such stalwarts as Bob Steele,



California's undergrowth was a poor substitute for the dense tropical undergrowth of Africa the 1943 Columbia serial **THE PHANTOM** was supposed to be set. [WOY Collection.]

Wally Wales, Buzz Barton, Art Mix, Buddy Roosevelt, Buffalo Bill, Jr., Franklyn Farnum, William Desmond, William Farnum, and Frank Rice. The director, Wallace Fox, had directed Tyler in his initial Monogram film, **PARTNERS OF THE TRAIL**.

POWDERSMOKE RANGE presented Tyler, as Sundown Saunders, with his first opportunity to portray a villain (and his first real opportunity to act) and he, to his credit, made the best of it — and later, especially as a character actor, was cast time after time in a similar type of role. Tyler, who reforms before his death in the film would later prove again in **STAGECOACH** (United Artists, 1939), **SAN ANTONIO** (Warner Brothers, 1945), et al., that he was especially effective in death scenes.

Western film critics have not always been kindly disposed toward **POWDERSMOKE RANGE**, which many feel was overrated, and poorly directed, but they generally concur that Tyler was the best thing about it.

The following year Tyler again co-starred in a quality feature at RKO, and again portrayed a shady character on the wrong side of the legal fence. In **THE LAST OUTLAW**, a reteam of Carey and Gib-

son, Tyler was Al Goss, an eastern racketeer who had gone West. The story was written by John Ford, but unfortunately he did not direct — Christy Cabanne did. Future singing cowboy Fred Scott, in his film debut, was featured in a small role.

BACK TO POVERTY ROW, 1936-38

Despite the good roles in the RKO films Tyler's career continued to flounder as he signed with yet another poverty row fringe organization. The years 1936-37 found him starring in eight quickie oaters for Sam Katzman's Victory organization.

It was at this point in his career that Tyler somewhat altered his image. He did so by exchanging the black shirt and hat ensembles that he had heretofore worn for light colored costuming. To complete the change he retired his black steed "Ace" and began to ride a white horse, "Baron."

Katzman produced the first five with Robert Hill in charge of direction — then on the last three, to the detriment of what was already a weak series, Katzman executed both functions (pun intended!).

After the completion of the Tyler series Katzman



Tom Tyler is prepared to bounce on somebody in this scene from chapter 6 of the 1943 Columbia serial **THE PHANTOM**. [WOY Collection.]

replaced him with Tim McCoy who, in 1938-39, starred in one of his last solo series. When Victory folded after the termination of the McCoy series, Katzman joined Monogram where he produced the East Side Kids. During the '50's Columbia hired him to produce medium-budget A-Westerns, several of which starred George Montgomery. He also produced the last serials filmed by that, or any other studio. In 1954 it was **RIDING WITH BUFFALO BILL** with Marshall Reed, and in 1956 he was in charge of the screen's final two serials: **PERILS OF THE WILDERNESS** with Dennis Moore; and **BLAZING THE OVERLAND TRAIL** with Moore and Lee Roberts. Perhaps it is only coincidental that Katzman was in charge when the serial finally crashed to earth.

Despite the fact that the late '30's and early '40's were the peak years in terms of the number of Westerns filmed, Tyler, in 1938, for the first time since he began his Western acting career in 1925, did not have a series. In 1938, in fact, Tyler did not make a single screen appearance, but signed to tour with the Wallace Brothers Circus.

Part of the explanation for Tyler's plight could be

attributed to the emergence of Gene Autry and the singing cowboy phenomenon. Most of the major Western studios were looking for musical talent and, as a result, they were letting many of their veterans go. The veterans, people such as Tyler, Bob Steele, Tim McCoy, Bill Cody, Buck Jones, Ken Maynard, and Hoot Gibson, found themselves either scrambling to hang on with the lower echelon independents, or without a job. And many of the independents failed because they could not develop their own singing cowboy series.

The singer was the new wave and the new stars were Autry, Dick Foran, Roy Rogers, Tex Ritter, Jack Randall, Bob Baker, George Houston, Fred Scott, Smith Ballew, and James Newill. Song of the singing cowboys failed to win popularity and soon faded from the scene, but in many instances they were given series that might have been given to Tyler, Steele, McCoy, et al.

FROM LUKE PLUMMER TO CAPTAIN MARVEL, 1939-41

After a year's absence from the screen, and after



Tom Tyler grapples with a native in this scene from the 1943 Columbia serial, **THE PHANTOM**. [WOY Collection.]

completing his circus tour, Tom Tyler's star began to brighten once more, but in a different manner. The years 1939-40 found Tyler essaying character parts in some of Hollywood's most prestigious films. In the former year John Ford, who would subsequently use Tyler many times, cast him in **DRUMS ALONG THE MOHAWK** and the classic Western, **STAGECOACH** (United Artists). In the latter Tyler, as villainous Luke Plummer, proved once more that he knew how to die when he expired onscreen after being shot offscreen by the Ringo Kid (John Wayne). In that same year Tyler appeared in **FRONTIER MARSHAL** (Fox, Randolph Scott) and had a bit part in **GONE WITH THE WIND**. He also acted in one B-Western released that year, supporting the Three Mesquiteers (John Wayne, Ray Corrigan, Max Terhune) in **THE NIGHT RIDERS** (Republic).

In 1940 Tyler continued to fill supporting roles in Western and non-Westerns, e.g., **GRAPES OF WRATH** (another Ford film), **BROTHER ORCHID**, **THE TALK OF THE TOWN**, **THE WESTERNER** (United Artists, Gary Cooper), **CHEROKEE STRIP** (Paramount, Richard Dix), and **THE LIGHT OF THE WESTERN STARS** (Paramount), a Zane Grey based

B-Western which starred Russell Hayden and featured Eddie Dean and Alan Ladd in minor roles.

In 1941, besides a supporting role in a Hopalong Cassidy entry, Tyler starred in the minor horror film, **THE MUMMY'S HAND** (directed by Christy Cabanne who had been in charge of **THE LAST OUTLAW** in 1936). But a real turning point was reached in his career in that year when he was cast in the title role in the Republic serial, **THE ADVENTURES OF CAPTAIN MARVEL**. It was Tyler's first serial role since **THE PHANTOM OF THE AIR** in 1933.

The Republic serial, directed by young serial experts John English and William Witney, turned out to be one of the best and most popular ever filmed, aided in no small way by the stunting of the accomplished stunt artist, David Sharpe. The supporting cast included Frank Coughlan, Jr., as Billy Baston, who was empowered with the ability to transform himself into an alter ego superhero, Captain Marvel (Tom Tyler), simply by uttering the word "Shazam," as well as Harry Worth, Reed Hadley, Jack Mulhall, Kenne Duncan, and Carleton Young.

The Captain Marvel character was brought to the screen only because Republic was unable to gain

the screen rights to Superman; the Captain Marvel serial, however, proved to be far superior to two subsequent Superman serials filmed by Columbia.

Once again a serial role had revitalized, and perhaps salvaged, Tom Tyler's career. Republic was so pleased with the actor's regained acceptance and popularity that it immediately signed him to become one of the Three Mesquiteers.

THE THREE MESQUITEERS, 1941-43

Republic inaugurated its Three Mesquiteers series in 1936, and it encompassed fifty-one films, and utilized twelve actors in nine different combinations before it expired in 1943.

In 1941 Tyler helped form the eighth combination when he became the eleventh actor to co-star in the popular and profitable series. In that year he inherited the role of Stony Brooke from Robert Livingston, who had just completed his second tour of duty with the trio, and teamed with Bob Steele (as Tucson Smith) and Rufe Davis (as Lullaby Joslin). Tyler co-starred with Steele in thirteen of the features with Davis providing comedic relief in the first seven and Jimmy Dodd doing the same in the final six.

Despite the series' popularity and its sustained quality even in its final year, Republic, believing that there was nothing more that could be done with the series, decided to discontinue it in 1943.

Ironically, Tyler and Steele had been featured in the original Three Mesquiteers film, **POWDERSMOKE RANGE** (RKO), but as Sundown Saunders and the Guadalupe Kid, respectively.

THE PHANTOM'S LAST RIDE, 1943-53

The Three Mesquiteers was Tom Tyler's final series — but he continued to find steady employment, primarily as a much in demand character actor — and did star in two more films.

In 1942, however, even before the demise of the Mesquiteers, he portrayed, in a supporting role, the Indian chief Geronimo in **VALLEY OF THE SUN** (RKO), starring Lucille Ball and James Craig. The next year he was effective as a mean and menacing medicine man named Clawtooth in a Wild Bill Elliott entry at Republic. The same year Tyler, in his next to last starring role, portrayed yet another comic strip hero in **THE PHANTOM** (Columbia). It was his seventh and last serial role.

As it turned out, with the exception of Buster Crabbe, Tyler starred in more serials than any other Western star — though only two were Westerns — but then, none of Crabbe's had a Western setting. Buster's and Tom's closest rivals were Buck Jones and Johnny Mack Brown who starred in six and five respectively, all of which were Westerns.

In 1944 Tyler supported Rod Cameron in the latter's first starring role in a Western feature, **BOSS**

OF BOOMTOWN (Universal), which also featured Fuzzy Knight and Ray Whitley. The next year John Ford used Tyler once more when he cast him in a small part in the excellent war drama, **THEY WERE EXPENDABLE**. The same year Tyler performed his specialty when he walked a full city block after being plugged by Errol Flynn in **SAN ANTONIO** (Warner Brothers).

In the same year he essayed his final starring role, in a nominal sense anyway, when he fronted for the Hoosier Hot Shots in **SING ME A SONG OF TEXAS** (Columbia).

In 1946 Tyler supported Randolph Scott in **BAD-MAN'S TERRITORY** (RKO). In the film Tyler portrayed Jesse James' brother Frank — a role he later reprised in **I SHOT JESSE JAMES** (Lippert, 1949) and **BEST OF THE BADMEN** (RKO, 1951, Robert Ryan).

Despite the onslaught of crippling arthritis, which contributed to his untimely death in 1954, Tyler also appeared in the following films: **CHEYENNE** (Warner Brothers, 1947, Dennis Morgan); **RETURN OF THE BADMEN** (RKO, 1948, Randolph Scott); **RED RIVER** (United Artists, 1948, John Wayne); **BLOOD ON THE MOON** (RKO, 1948, Robert Mitchum); **LUST FOR GOLD** (Columbia, 1949, Glenn Ford); **SHE WORE A YELLOW RIBBON** (RKO, 1949, John Wayne — directed by John Ford); and **SAMSON AND DELILAH**.

In 1949 Tyler also supported Don Barry, Wally Vernon, Mary Beth Hughes, and a host of musical groups in a real clunker entitled **SQUARE DANCE JUBILEE** (Lippert). The film would not be worth mentioning except for the fact that it featured Barry singing *The Girl in the Mink Blue Jeans*!

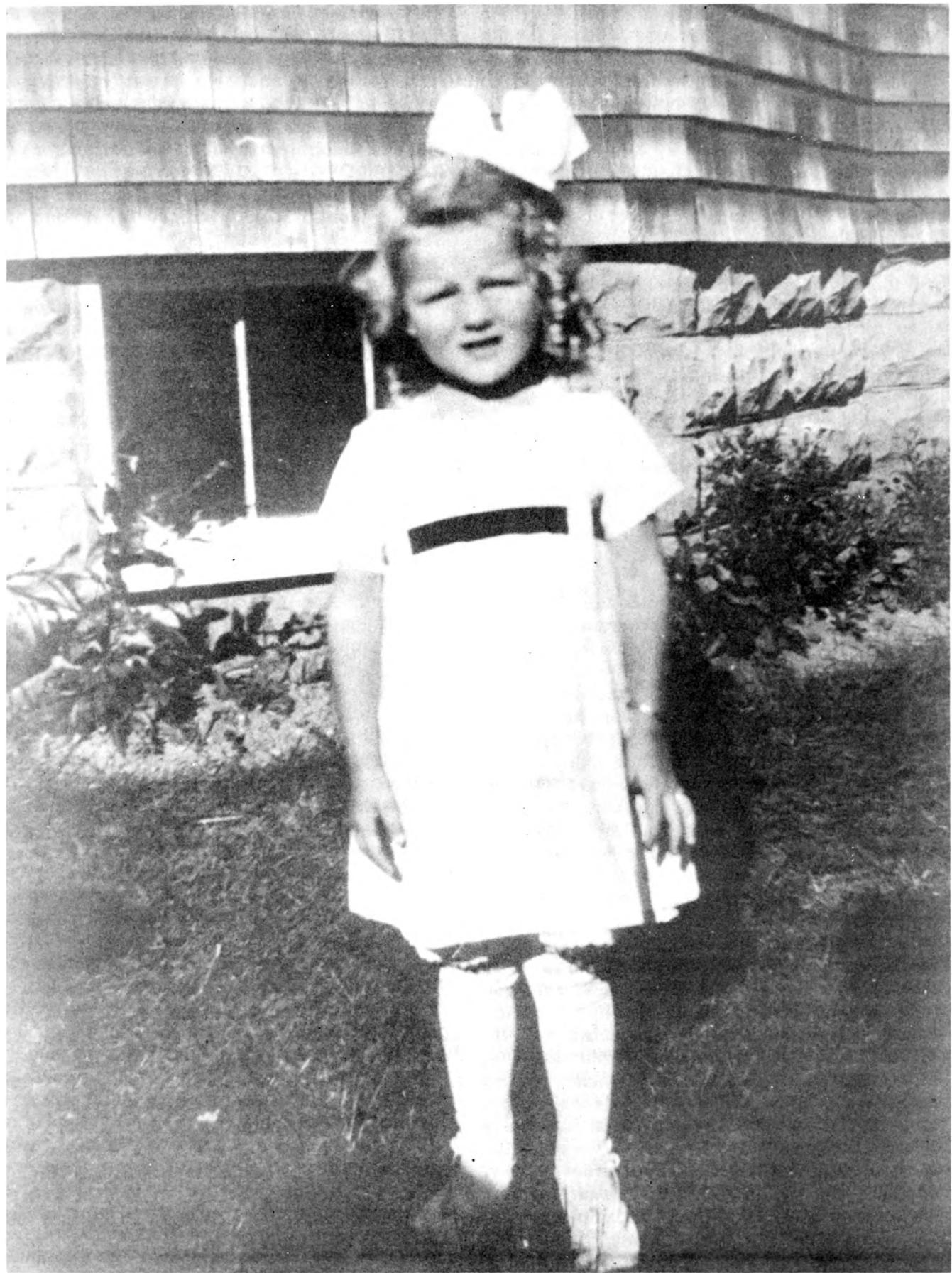
Tyler's best role and performance during the late '40's was in **CHEYENNE**. In fact the best thing about the otherwise routine film was the pairing of Tyler and Bob Steele as two marvelous henchmen-gunned.

In 1950 Tyler acted in six Lippert cheapies which starred Jimmy Ellison and Russell Hayden, as well as two Tim Holts at RKO, and a Roy Rogers at Republic. The Rogers film was **TRAIL OF ROBIN HOOD** which featured former star Jack Holt as well as guest stars Kermit Maynard, Tom Keene, Monte Hale, Rex Allen, Allan "Rocky" Lane, William Farnum, and two former "Tucsons" — Tyler and Ray "Crash" Corrigan.

As Tyler's health continued to deteriorate he was limited to an occasional TV role and one film per year in 1951-53. His final films were **BEST OF THE BADMEN**; **ROAD AGENT** (RKO, 1952, Tim Holt); and **COW COUNTRY** (Allied Artists, 1953, Edmond O'Brien).

Tyler then returned to Michigan where he lived with his sister until his death on May 1, 1954, at the age of fifty-one.

Tyler, in a career that spanned the years 1924-53 (nineteen years as a Western star), appeared in 131 Westerns, excluding unbilled parts as an extra or



Jean Rogers as a child, date unknown. [Courtesy of Author's Collection.]



John King and Jean Rogers look on as Don Briggs discusses the telegram with the coach in this scene from the 1936 Universal serial **ADVENTURES OF FRANK MERRIWELL**. (Courtesy of Author's collection.)

JEAN ROGERS

Talent, Versatility, Wholesomeness, Beauty, and Irrefragable Sexuality Combined to Make Her the Queen of the Serial World in the late Thirties

by Buck Rainey

Gardenia-white skin with the delicate flush of girlish wholesomeness, crowned by a silken mass of flaxen hair—this was lovely Jean Rogers in the halcyon years of the 1930's and 1940's. Mark Lamber-
ti, a Rogers biographer, expressed Jean's allurement quite aptly when he wrote, "*There is an appeal that is not the mystique of legend, nor the grace of an impeccable image on photographic film. There exists that appeal of a sensual nature, the pretty, blonde, girl next door, the American beauty of which dreams are made. Jean Rogers possesses that certain beauty, the prettiness of form and feature, the light blue eyes of an innocent, set beneath sleek, blonde curls that frame a cute, sly smile.*"

For all the roles this comely girl appeared in, cinema devotees best remember her portrayal of the enchanting "Dale Arden" in two of the most profitable and popular sound serials ever produced. Certainly any male with an eye for feminine pulchritude found his heart beating faster and his fantasies running amuck whenever this shimmering moonbeam of perfection appeared on the screen.

Jean Rogers had charisma before the word was in vogue. As a boy I could close my eyes and see red sails in the sunset as Jean and I, snuggling close, sat looking seaward beneath the palms on some faraway South Sea island beach. Or in an instant I could be carrying her down a mountain side in a blizzard, saving the life of this precious girl whose warm, radiant charm and heavenly blue eyes turned me from a mild-mannered nonentity into a dauntless protector. And just as quickly my mind could transport me into another fantasy to experience the drama to be had from the sound and fury of ancient aeroplane motors as I flew over rugged mountain wildernesses, desolate sands, and watery vastnesses with Jean in the cockpit in front of me, her champagne eyes, trusting smile, and nod of confidence far more effective than engine or wings in propelling me to victory over pursuing fiends of the skies.

Miss Rogers, who was born Eleanor Lovegren in Belmont, Massachusetts on March 25, 1916, gained her education in the public schools of the city of her birth. As a little girl in pinafore and pigtails, she had exhibited a rare natural aptitude for



Jean Rogers as a young lady begins to show the promise of the beauty she would later mature into, date unknown. [Courtesy of Author's collection.]



Jean Rogers doesn't seem as unhappy about the damage to the plane as do Noah Beery, Jr. and Clark Williams do in this scene from Chapter 8 of **TAILSPIN TOMMY IN THE GREAT AIR MYSTERY** (1935, Universal). [Courtesy of Author's collection.]

drawing, and it had been her hope to study art in New York and perhaps abroad. Her artistic talents ran to oil painting, music, and charcoal sketching. She was graduated from Belmont High School and intended matriculating at college but winning a beauty contest conducted nationally by Charles R. Rogers, later a Universal executive in charge of production, changed her plans.

Just before winning the contest, Jean was serving sodas in a little ice cream place in Belmont for 25 cents an hour. She had not considered an acting career before the day she and her mother took a boat ride to visit friends at Nantasket and she was picked out of the crowd as they disembarked by a man representing the Paramount beauty contest. Each day the man chose the most beautiful girl aboard the vessel as an entrant in the contest. When the boat neared Boston Harbor, he saw Jean standing gracefully against the forward rail, poised like the young aristocrat she was. The summer breeze was rippling her lovely hair and her eyes were alight with the joy of living. The gentleman knew instantly that his labors were over for that day.

At first Jean and her mother were reluctant to embark upon such an adventure, one entirely foreign to their ideas. But the scout was persuasive. The next day, Jean, more for the lark of the thing than from any real desire for a Hollywood career, found herself competing for divisional honors, matching her charm against that of other beauties. The contest was conducted by Charles Rogers as a means of getting new talent for his production **EIGHT GIRLS IN A BOAT** (1933). Jean won the divisional honors and went to Boston to compete in the New England finals at the Metropolitan Theatre. It was a "survival of the loveliest" competition and, day after day, Jean was chosen as the outstanding beauty. She won first place from a group of forty-five candidates and in July, 1933 found herself en route to Glamourland, chaperoned, of course, by her mother, Mrs. Ellen Lovegren.

Jean and her mother found Southern California delightful. They liked the climate, the people, the freedom of expression. Upon completion of her work in **EIGHT GIRLS IN A BOAT** Jean and Mrs. Lovegren decided they'd stay in Hollywood. The



Jean Rogers as a teenager about the time she won the beauty contest that started her on the way to Hollywood. [Courtesy of Author's Collection.]



Jean Rogers acts concerned that Buster Crabbe can't fly this 1936 version of a rocket ship in this scene from the first chapter of the Universal serial **FLASH GORDON**. [Courtesy of Author's collection.]

vibrant young beauty had no illusions as to stardom overnight. With intense earnestness, she set to work molding her career as an actress. Warner Brothers signed her to a contract and during the following year she got a lot of dramatic schooling but no screen roles. Offered a second contract by the studio, Jean asked for her release and in May, 1935 signed with Universal, which was looking for a young ingenue for the lead in **STORMY** (1935). Jean got the part without a test. However, she was first put into **MANHATTAN MOON** (1935) to gain experience. Asked to pick a name for herself, she thought of a young friend named Jean from her hometown and of Charles Rogers, who had brought her to California. Thus, Jean Rogers.

It is, of course, her six serials for Universal for which she is best known and which established her as the reigning queen of serials in the 1935-1940 era, taking over the throne from retiring Lucile Browne, who made her last chapter play in 1934.

Jean was a very radiant lead in **TAILSPIN TOMMY IN THE GREAT AIR MYSTERY** (1935) and **THE ADVENTURES OF FRANK MERRIWELL** (1936), both brisk and glossy enough to entertain audiences that

were not overly demanding. She was quite capable of registering winsomeness and came through with a generous measure of eye-and-ear appeal. Audiences of the day got a reasonable number of goose pimples from watching Clark Williams (as "Tailspin Tommy"), Noah Beery, Jr. (as "Skeeter"), and Jean (as "Betty Lou") in this "T-Model Fordish" aeroplane adventure. Though today's youngsters, fed on **Star Trek**, **Galatica**, **STAR WARS**, **Wonder Woman**, and such, would find it laughable, it was a thrilling film in its day, what with a mystery plane camouflaged to suggest a great Eagle, roaring volcanos, dirigibles, jungle fortresses, wild animals, and cannibals. Jean had taken over the role of "Betty Lou" from Patricia Farr, and Clark Williams had succeeded Maurice Murphy, both changes making for a better serial than its predecessor.

THE ADVENTURES OF FRANK MERRIWELL evolved from the magazine series that ran for nearly twenty years. Its all a mixture of college athletics and a treasure hunt hampered by much villainy. As "Elsie Belwood," Jean is about the nicest thing about the film, though John King and Don Briggs do their chores competently.



Jean Rogers hides behind the comforting shoulder of Scott Kolk in this publicity photo for the 1937 Universal serial **SECRET AGENT X-9**. [Courtesy of Author's collection.]



Frank Shannon, Priscilla Lawson and Charles Middleton look on as Buster Crabbe carries Jean Rogers in this scene from Chapter 3 of the 1936 Universal serial **FLASH GORDON**. (Courtesy of Author's collection.)

It was **FLASH GORDON** (1936) that zoomed Jean into almost instant worldwide popularity and, as history has shown, gave her screen immortality. Up to that time, there had never been a serial like **FLASH GORDON**. It was pure fantasy, pure escapist film fare. The cognoscenti and sophisticates might curl a supercilious lip at the childishness of the Alex Raymond characters brought to life by scenarists George Plymton, Basil Dickey, Ella O'Neill, and Frederick Stephanie, yet it was just what the doctor ordered, evidently, for a depression-weary public that yearned for bigger-than-life heroes and cinema fantasy that allowed people to escape for a little while each week the drudgery and hoplessness of their hum-drum lives.

The role of Dale Arden was not really a challenging one, as Jean usually had only to utter such lines as "Flash, look out" and "Ooohh, Flash!" Her wardrobe was sometimes on the skimpy side. Filling attractively some plunging costumes that were incongruous to the male swashbuckling, Jean showed enough cleavage here and there to tempt male viewers to watch her and to let Buster Crabbe go it alone. She was not, and made no attempt to be,

a siren, yet she was all the more appealing for it. Her fragile beauty caused the lechery directed her way to seem all the more sinister. "Ming, the Merciless" had a moral streak in him and he never could quite bring off the wedding ceremony he insisted on as a prerequisite to having his way with lovely Dale. However, "King Vultan" stalked her without thought of wedding bells, as brought out this comment by Raymond Stedman in his book *The Serials* (University of Oklahoma Press, 1971):

Moments after the earth girl is brought to him as a prisoner, Vultan (John Lipson) begins his game by using a pet bear to terrify his prey and force her, trembling, against a wall. Then, riddling the chamber of pets and underlings, he closes in on the nearly hysterical damsel for what clearly is not the kill. The focus at the end of this chapter is not upon the more serious concurrent action—Flash's rocket, about to be blasted from the sky by one of Vultan's ray guns—but upon the predicament of Dale Arden, her



Jean Rogers as a brunette in this publicity photo and just as lovely. [Courtesy of Author's collection.]



Jean Rogers confronts John King as Noah Beery, Jr. and Jackie Morrow look on in this scene from the 1937 Universal serial **ACE DRUMMOND**. [Courtesy of Author's collection.]

slender form pressed against the wall, her midriff sucked in till it will go no farther, her bosom thrust forward to the limit of its dimensions. Shots of the approaching rocket intercut this sequence, each shift to the menaced maiden showing her breathing deeper, ever deeper, until, with Vultan only a few steps away, the closing titles suspend her agony for another week.

ACE DRUMMOND (1936), based on the newspaper character created by Captain Eddie Rickenbacker, was produced by Henry MacRae, directed by Ford Beebe and Cliff Smith, and written by Wyndham Git-tens, Norman S. Hall, and Ray Trampe. Throw in John King, Jean Rogers, and Noah Beery, Jr. as the principals, a mystery figure known as "The Dragon," a sinister Russian gang, a Buddhist temple where strange things happen, mysterious electrical wizardry, and numerous aerial battles and the result almost assuredly had to be a great serial. And so it was. As "Ace Drummond," John King is out to help "Peggy Trainor" (Jean Rogers) find her lost

father, discover the location of a mountain of jade in Mongolia, and capture the mysterious "Dragon" who has resolved to stop the construction of the Mongolian link necessary in the establishment of a globe-circling airplane service. The serial depended more on a strong plot than continuous action, but the thrills were there.

SECRET AGENT X-9 (1937), a cops-and-robbers sort of thing, is thoroughly hokey but a reasonably entertaining he-man thriller, though Jean suffers the fate of many cliffhanger and cactus cuties. Because of the always overshadowing hero roles, femmes in these films usually don't get much chance at being anything but "up-gazers" while the big boys emote, which frequently makes the gals not a little ridiculous. The plot of this serial has Secret Agent X-9 (Scott Kolk) assigned to track down the stolen Belgravian crown jewels. Rogers is "Shara Graustark," for whom X-9 risks life and limb for 12 chapters.

FLASH GORDON'S TRIP TO MARS (1938) reunited most of the principals from **FLASH GORDON** in a sequel many believe to be better than the first film, though made for half as much money. This



Jean Rogers is held captive in this scene from the 1938 Universal serial **FLASH GORDON'S TRIP TO MARS**.
[Courtesy of Author's Collection.]



Jean Rogers turns to Frank Shannon as Charles Middleton commands the guards to watch Buster Crabbe in this scene from Chapter 2 of **FLASH GORDON** (1936, Universal). [Courtesy of Author's Collection.]

time out, Jean was allowed to keep her natural hair coloring (light brunette) rather than appearing as a full-fledged blonde, as she had in her previous serial outings. In each two reel episode there were usually enough excitement, thrills, and adventure to make one's heart jump, turn somersaults, and then stand still. Jean showed the whites of her eyes in the tight places and romanced in a very subdued manner, earning another feather in her popularity cap while Universal scored with a boxoffice winner.

Jean did not appear in the third entry of the Flash Gordon trilogy made in 1940. By that time she had gotten out of her Universal contract and had gone to 20th Century-Fox. In a way, it is unfortunate that she did not work longer at Universal. Most certainly she would have repeated her role as Dale Arden in the third and final Flash Gordon serial, **FLASH GORDON CONQUERS THE UNIVERSE** (1940). Since the Laemmles (Universal bosses) wanted to keep her their chief serial heroine, she probably would have been cast in two or three other serials, definitely clinching the title "Queen of the Sound Serials." As it is, that honor is split and shared by Jean, Lucile Browne, and Linda Stirling, with Aline Towne,

Phyllis Coates, Dorothy Gulliver, and Kay Aldridge trailing behind as runners-up.

Though Jean was cast in features at Universal, she only got the main femme role in "B" films—never in the "A" productions. Her first co-starring role in a feature film was **STORMY** (1935), a horse story with Noah Beery, Jr. as male lead. In **CONFLICT** (1936) she is a newspaper woman responsible for the reformation of a fighter, played by John Wayne. She was quite good as the daughter of Boris Karloff in **NIGHT KEY** (1937) and made pleasing programmers with James Dunn, Scott Kolk, William Gargan, and others. But she felt that if she stayed at Universal she would be kept in the serials and programmers indefinitely; too, the studio would not raise her salary. She believed that she had enough talent and experience to move into bigger features, and so she left. She was appearing in a radio soap opera for Ponds Products when her agent got her a contract at Fox. There she appeared as leading lady in more good programmers—**INSIDE STORY** (1939), **ELSA MAXWELL'S HOTEL FOR WOMEN** (1939), **STOP, LOOK AND LOVE** (1939), **HEAVEN WITH A BARBED WIRE FENCE** (1939), **THE MAN**



Richard Alexander points something out to Buster Crabbe, Jean Rogers, Frank Shannon and Donald Kerr in this scene from Chapter 7 of the 1938 Universal **FLASH GORDON'S TRIP TO MARS**. [Courtesy of Author's collection.]

WHO WOULDN'T TALK (1940), **CHARLIE CHAN IN PANAMA** (1940), **VIVA CISCO KID** (1940), **YESTERDAY'S HERO** (1940), and **LET'S MAKE MUSIC** (1941), the latter on loan out to RKO. In her only "A" film, she had a minor but nice role as Dean Jagger's second wife in **BRIGHAM YOUNG** (1940).

Jean left Fox in 1941 for the same reason she had left Universal. She wanted a better salary and better films. She signed with Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer and got the Metro buildup and better parts.

While at 20th Century-Fox she had met Dan Winkler, Myron Selznick's assistant, and they were married. However, they divorced about 1942. Louis Mayer was gradually building her into a star—and to be a star at MGM was to really be a star! But when her contract came up for renewal in 1943 he insisted that she not remarry—her work had to come first, last, and always. Jean and Dan were planning to remarry. She had to decide what was most important to her—stardom at MGM or marriage. So she opted for a family life rather than a film career. She and Winkler married for the second time. She did not make a film in 1944, but did give birth to her

daughter, Ellen. In 1945 she made a single film, **ROUGH, TOUGH, AND READY**, with Chester Morris. In 1946 she played the female lead in a trio of films—one each for Monogram, Paramount, and Republic. In 1947 she starred in **BACK LASH** for 20th Century-Fox; in 1948 she had the lead in **SPEED TO SPARE** for Paramount and **FIGHTING BACK** for 20th Century-Fox. Her last screen appearance was in a supporting role in **THE SECOND WOMAN** (1951), just for the fun of it. By this time she was too engrossed in her family to think much about her movie career. Her mother was quite ill for a long period of time (she died in 1954) and Jean spent much time taking care of her, plus raising her young daughter.

By 1960 the Winklers had drifted apart and decided to separate. There was no divorce and no hard feelings. When Dan became too ill to drive himself to work, Jean became his girl Friday. When his condition worsened, he entered the Motion Picture Country Hospital. It there he died in early 1970.

For several years Jean worked as a newspaper woman and thoroughly enjoyed it. She has kept up



Frank Shannon, Richard Alexander, Jean Rogers and Donald Kerr watch the results of Buster Crabbe's action with the valve in this scene from Chapter 13 from the 1938 Universal serial **FLASH GORDON'S TRIP TO MARS**. (Courtesy of Author's collection.)

her painting and sells many of her sketches. Her fans have rediscovered her, and she has appeared at several film conventions during the last few years, much to the delight of those young enough in heart to remember their Saturdays with Jean Rogers so long ago. The romance still flourishes, though all participants, and the fantasy it self, are etched with the lines of the passing decades.

—BR

FILM LIST: JEAN ROGERS
Compiled by Buck Rainey

1. **EIGHT GIRLS IN A BOAT** (1/5/33) Paramount.
2. **MANHATTAN MOON** (7/35) Universal.
3. **STORMY** (10/22/35) Universal.
4. **FIGHTING YOUTH** (11/35) Universal.
5. **TAILSPIN TOMMY IN THE GREAT AIR MYSTERY** (1935) Universal-12 chapter serial.
6. **ADVENTURES OF FRANK MERRIWELL** (1/13/36) Universal-12 chapter serial.
7. **DON'T GET PERSONAL** (2/12/36) Universal.
8. **FLASH GORDON** (4/6/36) Universal-13 chapter serial.

9. **MY MAN GODFREY** (9/6/36) Universal.
10. **TWO IN A CROWD** (9/13/36) Universal.
11. **ACE DRUMMOND** (10/19/36) Universal-13 chapter serial.
12. **CONFLICT** (11/29/36) Universal.
13. **MYSTERIOUS CROSSING** (12/27/36) Universal.
14. **WHEN LOVE IS YOUNG** (4/4/37) Universal.
15. **SECRET AGENT X-9** (4/12/37) Universal-12 chapter serial.
16. **NIGHT KEY** (5/2/37) Universal.
17. **THE WILDCATTER** (6/13/37) Universal.
18. **REPORTED MISSING** (8/15/37) Universal.
19. **TIME OUT FOR MURDER** (9/23/38) 20th Century-Fox.
20. **ALWAYS IN TROUBLE** (11/4/38) 20th Century-Fox.
21. **MARS ATTACKS THE WORLD** (11/18/38) Universal-feature release of *Flash Gordon's Trip to Mars*.
22. **FLASH GORDON'S TRIP TO MARS** (1938) Universal-15 chapter serial.
23. **INSIDE STORY** (3/10/39) 20th Century-Fox.
24. **ELSA MAXWELL'S HOTEL FOR WOMEN**



Jean Rogers and Buck Rainey at the Dallas Film Convention in July, 1977. [Courtesy of Author's collection.]

(8/14/39) 20th Century-Fox.

25. **STOP, LOOK AND LOVE** (9/22/39) 20th Century-Fox
26. **HEAVEN WITH A BARBED WIRE FENCE** (11/3/39) 20th Century-Fox.
27. **THE MAN WHO WOULDN'T TALK** (2/2/40) 20th Century-Fox.
28. **CHARLIE CHAN IN PANAMA** (3/1/40) 20th Century-Fox.
29. **VIVA CISCO KID** (4/12/40) 20th Century-Fox.
Cisco Kid series.
30. **YESTERDAY'S HEROES** (9/20/40) 20th Century-Fox.
31. **BRIGHAM YOUNG-FRONTIERSMAN** (12/27/40) 20th Century-Fox.
32. **LET'S MAKE MUSIC** (1/17/41) RKO.
33. **DESIGN FOR SCANDAL** (12/4/41) MGM.
34. **DR. KILDARE'S VICTORY** (1/4/42) MGM.
35. **SUNDAY PUNCH** (5/4/42) MGM.
36. **PACIFIC RENDEZVOUS** (6/4/42) MGM.
37. **THE WAR AGAINST MRS. HADLEY** (9/4/42) MGM.
38. **A STRANGER IN TOWN** (4/4/43) MGM.
39. **SWING SHIFT MAISIE** (10/4/43) MGM.

40. **WHISTLING IN BROOKLYN** (12/43) MGM.
41. **ROUGH, TOUGH AND READY** (3/22/45)
Columbia.
42. **THE STRANGE MR. GREGORY** (1/12/46)
Monogram.
43. **GAY BLADES** (1/25/46) Republic.
44. **HOT CARGO** (6/28/46) Paramount.
45. **BACK LASH** (3/47) 20th Century-Fox.
46. **SPEED TO SPARE** (5/14/48) Paramount.
47. **FIGHTING BACK** (8/48) 20th Century-Fox.
48. **THE SECOND WOMAN** (3/16/51) United Artists/
Popkin

NESTORIA MOVIE AND COMIC
THE BIG REEL
MADISON, NC 27025



Carol Forman as the villainess Sombra in the 1947 Republic serial **THE BLACK WIDOW**. [WOY Collection.]

CAROL FORMAN Interview

by Robert Pilk

Carol Forman, a favorite screen villainess in the late 1940s and early 1950s, is really a nice person, so nice that she once took in 25 stray cats for pets. So why then did she actually shoot a man during the filming of **THE BLACK WIDOW**?

"I shot him in the hand," Forman said in a recent telephone interview. "It happened while the lights were being set up for a scene in which I was to use a gun. I knew there were blanks in the gun, but I didn't know the blanks had wadding in them."

"So the prop man gave me the gun and I was trying to get used to it for the scene," she continued. "The gun went off accidentally and shot one of the lighting men in the hand. There was blood and everything. But he was so sweet about it."

Unless you are a Saturday matinee serial buff, you probably have never heard of Forman. But the serial fan can tell you they didn't come any meaner than the slinky lady who was forever trying to do in the good guys.

From her home in Sherman Oaks, California, Forman said that fans were usually surprised when they actually met her.

After she played the part of "Sombra" in the serial **THE BLACK WIDOW**, Forman took a trip to New York and visited Radio City Music Hall to see the Rockettes, where by coincidence the serial was showing.

"I was surprised to see they had a huge paper cutout of me as Sombra in the lobby," she said. "When I went to the ladies room, there were two teenage girls talking about the Black Widow and how mean and awful she was."

"Actually, people are always a little shocked to see I'm not really nasty," she laughed.

Born in Alabama, Carol Sauls' father was an attorney who died when she was young, and her mother never remarried. As far back as she can remember, she always wanted to be an actress.

"The first time I saw a motion picture, I wanted to act and sing. I told everybody I wanted to be an actress. I was so precocious that I was always the



Carol Forman as Sombra seems deeply disturbed as the result of a radio report in this scene from Chapter 5 of the 1947 Republic serial **THE BLACK WIDOW**. [WOY Collection.]

lead in school plays and recitals.

"Also, I had an incredible ability to memorize. When I was two years old, I could sing every verse of the hymn *Brighten The Corner*," she continued.

Taking summer courses to graduate high school early, she left home at the age of 16 for Hollywood.

"It was never in my mother's mind that I'd do anything but motion pictures and when we realized I had to go to Hollywood to be in pictures, she told me I must go.

"I know that broke her heart, because I was the apple of her eye," Forman stated.

She took Carol Forman for her stage name after marrying an Air Force officer, Robert Forman, but the marriage didn't last long. "He didn't want to give up his career and I didn't want to give up mine," she explained.

Forman started acting in theater productions, where an agent noticed her and signed her to a contract. Her first role in movies, at the age of 16, was a small part in **FROM THIS DAY FORWARD** (1946) which starred Joan Fontaine.

"I didn't want anyone to know I was so inexperienced, but I didn't even know where the camera

was," she related. "I didn't know where to look."

That small speaking part led to a contract with RKO Studios, and from then on, Forman said, she worked constantly.

"In those days, you got your training on camera, acting in just about everything," said Forman. "I did westerns, whodunnits, all kinds of other things. At the same time, the drama, singing and dancing coaches at the studio worked with me.

"I was working in the theater at the same time, even while I was doing pictures. I would do movies by day and theater by night. But the studio finally complained, saying I was looking tired, so I had to quit the theater work," she continued.

Amid her other movie work, Forman began acting in serials in 1947 with her favorite role, Sombra, in Republic's **THE BLACK WIDOW**. Bruce Edwards starred as the dashing hero who was constantly falling into the clutches of his beautiful but insidious foe.

"Serials were bread-and-butter films," Forman explained. "You did them to eat, but you didn't go around bragging about it."

"I really loved the serials, though," she continued.



The three principals, Bruce Edwards, Virginia Lindley and Carol Forman, are shown in this publicity photo for the 1947 Republic serial **THE BLACK WIDOW**. [WOY Collection.]

"For one thing, you had all these gadgets to work with and the beautiful costumes. And I was always the lead, the obstacle to the leading man. It was really a meaty part for me."

How did a nice person do such a good job being a villainess on screen? "I'd think of all the mean and ugly things I could when I was Sombra or the Spider Lady. And not once did I ever become sympathetic or nice!" she said. "I've played good girls in some movies, but I didn't like it. I liked being the heavy. Not everyone can be as convincing as I am."

One thing helping Forman in her career in the low-budget movies was her phenomenal memory. "I was a quick study," she explained. "I could read the script twice and never make a mistake. In the time I made movies, I only flubbed a line once." (Good memory was an important plus for any B-movie actor, as the tight budgets didn't leave room for a lot of retakes.)

"There were no problems getting serials," Forman added. "I turned down more than I did, because I was afraid of getting type-cast."

Along with **THE BLACK WIDOW**, Forman made four other serials: **BRICK BRADFORD** (1947),

SUPERMAN (1948), **FEDERAL AGENTS VS. UNDERWORLD, INC.** (1949) and **BLACKHAWK** (1952). These last three also starred Kirk Alyn, a well-known leading man of the serials.

"My favorite role was the Black Widow," Forman confided. "Mike Frankovich was the director, and he was trying to get some recognition so he could move on up to bigger features. So he put a lot of care in the production of it." (Coincidentally, after working with Frankovich, Forman learned that while the producer had been in the Air Force, he had met her husband.)

She got along well with her co-stars, and found most of them easy to work with. "I loved everybody," she said. "I enjoyed working with Kirk (Alyn) and I just loved working with Tim (Holt). They were always pulling jokes on you. Tim would try to get me to laugh when my face was on camera, and sometimes he succeeded."

"Rosemary LaPlanche (her co-star in **FEDERAL AGENTS**) was as sweet as she could be. We didn't have any of the bitchiness you see in other places."

Spencer Bennett, the director in many of her films, held a special place in her heart. "Everybody

A REPUBLIC SERIAL
IN 13 CHAPTERS



The red and black sorta merge in this black and white photo of the one sheet for the 1947 Republic serial **THE BLACK WIDOW**, making it hard to read. [WOY Collection.]

called him Spence, and he was a prince," Forman commented. "He was tall, straight, very athletic. He had a beautiful outlook on life. He never lost his temper, never got nervous. He loved working with me and I loved working with him."

While shooting the action-packed movies was sometimes risky for the male stars, Forman didn't have much to do with the stunts.

"I drove a car through a barricade once, and I remember one movie when I ran down a long flight of stairs, but I usually never did stunts," she explained. "In the first place, I am not at all brave. And in the second place, they didn't want to take a chance of getting the stars hurt, because you couldn't finish the film then."

Riding the horses while making westerns presented another problem. "I like horses," said Forman, "but they don't like me. They won't mind me at all and just start going in circles. When I had to ride a horse, they would attach a wire to him and someone on the ground would keep him from running away."

Costumes, or the lack of them, could also be a bit risky to an actor's health. "When we were filming **BRICK BRADFORD**, we were in Lone Pine (at the foot of Mt. Whitney in California) and it looks like a desert, but it was freezing cold.

"I was running around in this little G-string bikini type of costume, and I was almost frozen! They were rubbing me down and trying to warm me up between each scene," she related with a laugh.

Serials were hard work and not much fun for Forman. "You had to work fast and the hours were long," she explained. "Sometimes there was no stand-in, who gives you a chance to sit down, so there were times when I was on my feet for eight hours straight, except for a lunch break."

"It was hard work, but it was also exciting," Forman continued. "Actors live in a different world. We think differently, we lose touch with other phases of life."

"You have to be a part of it to know the excitement. To me, acting is the epitome of life. There is nothing that can give you more fulfillment."

Other movies Forman appeared in include **THE FALCON'S ADVENTURE** (1946) with Tom Conway, several Tim Holt westerns at RKO, **OH, SUSANNAH** (1951) with Rod Cameron and Forrest Tucker and **BY THE LIGHT OF THE SILVERY MOON** (1953) with Doris Day.

She also appeared in several early television shows, including *The Loretta Young Show*, *77 Sunset Strip*, *Dr. Hudson's Secret Journal*, *The Files of Jeffrey Jones* and *The Cisco Kid*.

"The shot three or four episodes of *The Cisco Kid* at the same time," Forman commented. "You'd be a different character on the same set, so they'd shoot one scene, say, in front of a bank, then you'd change costumes and they'd shoot another. So they'd have three or four shows when they were

through, but you only got paid for one show."

Although she would have liked to have made the step to big-budget films at such studios as MGM and Warner Bros., Forman never did quite make it to the top echelon.

"I never really knew how to push myself," she said. "The people who got to the top fought to get there, and I just didn't have that kind of training."

"I'm surprised, knowing what I know now, that I did as well as I did. But today it takes even more aggressiveness."

Forman's contract with RKO ended, she said, in a fight to avoid the "casting couch."

"It was the old story," she said, "of 'will you or won't you?'. I said no to a producer and that's how I lost my contract."

During her film career, she met and married television executive Bill Dennis. "I had never wanted children of my own, but he was divorced and his ex-wife would not keep his three children. So we kept them and moved to Texas, and I had to quit my career in movies."

Forman's husband died five years ago and she moved back to Hollywood, where she hopes to resume her film career. "I've been working with a drama coach, getting my photographs, just doing the things it takes to get back," she explained. "I'm getting my confidence back up and contacting some of the people I know in the business."

"I have to fight for myself," she added. "I've been protected most of my life, but now I have to fend for myself."

While she would like a part in one of the afternoon soap operas (**All My Children** is her favorite), she notes that prime time television is picking up an old movie trend.

"Isn't it funny that after all these years, shows like **Dallas** and **Dynasty** are very popular," she asked, "and after all, what are they but serials?" —RP



Carol Forman as she looks today in a publicity photo. [Courtesy of Author's collection.]

No. 44

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IN THIS ISSUE:
Evans' 1983 Chronicle
Johnny Weissmuller
The Woman's Picture
and more.



THIS 'N' THAT

by Linda and Ron Downey, Editors



October 16, 1984

Dear Friends and Subscribers,

It has been nine months since the last issue and a hectic nine months here at WOY. Since we have other matters to discuss we consider more important, we will only give you a quick summary of why it took nine months between issues. 1.) Our typesetter broke, causing lots of delay and \$600 in repairs. 2.) Another troublesome and long illness for Ron. 3.) Conventions [in addition to the regular film conventions we normally attend we have had to add booksellers conventions]. 4.) Our first paperback book took longer than anticipated, but we think the time was worth the final product.

And that effort and time paid off in a couple of extra bonuses. 1.) The books are helping WOY to get some extra publicity resulting in more subscribers to all our publications. 2.) Between the book sales and new subscribers WOY is in its best position financially for some time. We are still a shoestring operation but at least we are able to afford a new shoestring when the old one breaks.

Another item which has helped *Cliffhanger* specifically has been the merger of *Serial World* into *Favorite Westerns* to get a new publication called *Favorite Westerns, Serials Plus*. We are sorry that this had to happen, but Jeff Walton is planning another serial publication called *Serial Classics* so you serial buffs should now have three serial publications.

We have had several letters indicating that you readers want more profiles of serial stars and not so many chapter by chapter replays of the serials. Well this issue should make you happy, but we have not completely abandoned the chapter by chapter coverage but will try to balance future issues better. It takes awhile to get the flow of material coming from the writers.

Please notice that this issue is bound like a paperback book and all future issues will be bound the same way. [Another bonus of the book publishing.] Also you'll notice the issue has more pages and is on a thicker better quality paper.

Future issues will hopefully be even bigger still. We hope that in the future issues will be coming closer together but will be on a floating schedule which means that there will be no special date or number of issues per year. Since your subscriptions are for a certain number of issues you'll be the

beneficiary of issues that will be selling for \$4 and \$5 by the single issue.

You'll also notice that our traditional kraft envelope has been replaced with a heavy gauge plastic one. The larger issues and plastic envelopes are results of cost studies Ron did that showed that the covers and envelopes cost more than the rest of the issue. Also larger issues cost less to mail per page than smaller issues. Also because of the new binding we have a chance at a different distributing arrangement which will hopefully give us a larger budget to work with.

We have had to go to a floating schedule for all the magazines because of the success of the paperback book publishing. *Cliffhanger* subscribers should notice the change less than our other magazines because we have never been able to get it into a regular groove since it began. We will do as many issues a year as possible but no guarantee how many.

If any of you are dissatisfied at any time with our service, you can write and get a complete refund for any remaining issues on your subscription!!!!

We have never made any profit on *Cliffhanger*, in fact, it is the smallest circulation of our publications. It appears this might change, but we have to live and pay our bills! So we feel, since the paperbacks seem to make a profit, we have to give them first priority on our time.

But you serials buffs will benefit from the paperback book publishing in the form of a book by Buck Rainey entitled *Sirens of the Serials*. It should be out sometime in 1985. Other books in the planning stages will interest serial buffs also.

Until next time God Bless,
Linda and Ron

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SERIAL WORLD

Serial World is an excellent magazine for the fans of those great Saturday Serials. Many Photos. The first issue are many reprinted with new color covers and some new material. These are done so far.

1. Spy Hunters; **Batman**; Rocketman; Remembering Roy Barcroft; more.
2. John Hart; Profile of Serial Stars; Anthony Warde; B-Western Stars; more.
3. **Trader Tom**; Harry Lauter interview; **Superman**; John Hart interview; more.
4. Jack Mulhall interview; Don 'Red' Barry; Serial Villains; **Superman** synopsis part 1; more.
5. **Tim Tyler's Luck**; Frankie Thomas interview; **Superman** synopsis part 2; more.
6. **Superman** synopsis part 3; Serial Ratings; Comics Heroes on the Screen; Duncan Renaldo interview.
7. **Superman** synopsis part 4; Captain Video; Louise Currie interview; and more.
8. **Ace Drummond**; Terry Frost interview; Ray 'Crash' Corrigan; **Superman** finish; more.
9. Marshal Reed interview; **The Great Adventures of Wild Bill Hickok**; **Jungle Menace** part 1.
10. Tris Coffin interview; Ralph Byrd; **Deadwood Dick**; **Jungle Menace** conclusion; and more.

Issues 10 through 20 are to be reprinted in upcoming months but we still have a very limited supply of some of the original black and white issues. These will become collectors items.

14. **Spy Smasher**; **King of the Mounties** part 1; more.
16. Larry Stewart interview; **Brenda Starr Reporter**; more.
17. The Rocketsuit Saga; Larry Stewart interview cont.; **Undersea Kingdom** part 1; more.

The following have color covers and the higher numbers have some interior color.

21. NBC's **Cliffhanger's** series; **The Return of Chandu**; **The Roar of the Iron Horse** finish; more.
22. **Curse of Dracula** story line; **Crimson Ghost** part 1; Revisiting the **Lost City**; more.
23. **Jungle Girl**; **King of the Forest Rangers**; **Crimson Ghost** part 2; **Jack Armstrong** part 1; more.
24. **Jungle Queen**; **Crimson Ghost**; part 2; **Jack Armstrong** finish; more.
25. **The Lost City** part 1; **Crimson Ghost** finish; Brick Bradford; more.
26. **Miracle Rider** part 1; **The Lost City** part 2; **The Lone Ranger Rides Again** part 1; more.
27. **The Lost City** part 3; **The Long Ranger Rides Again** finish; **The Miracle Rider** part 2; more.
28. **Drums of Fu Manchu** part 1; **Miracle Rider** finish; **Lost City** part 4; **Smilin' Jack** bubble gum cards
29. **Drums of Fu Manchu** finish; **Lost City** finish; **The New Adventures of Batman & Robin**; more.
30. **The Spider's Web** part 1; **The Phantom of the Air**; Serial Heroes on Record; more.
31. **The Spider's Web** finish; **The Purple Monster Strikes** part 1; Serial Heroes on Record 2; more.
32. **Purple Monster** finish; **The Fire Fighters**; **The Sea Hound**; **Blake of Scotland Yard** part 1; more.
33. **Blake of Scotland Yard** finish; **Chick Carter Detective**; **The Range Fighter**; **The Black Book**; more.
34. **Riders of Death Valley**; **King of the Rocketmen**; **Pearl White**; **The Fast Express**; more.
35. **Daredevils of the Red Circle** part 1; **Dave Sharpe**; **Blazing the Overland Trail**; **John Duncan**; more.
36. **G-Men vs. The Black Dragon** part 1; **Dead End Kids**; **Daredevils of the Red Circle** finish; more.
37. Interviews with Carol Forman and Tom Steele.

MOVIE MELODIES is another Serial World publication with lots of photos and short articles about Movie Musicals. Only three issues are available so far.

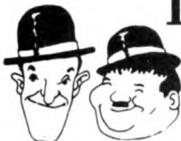
FUNNY BUSINESS is another Serial World publication with lots of photos and short articles about Movie Comedies. Three issues available so far.

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 I Love Lucy, Andy Griffith TV Shows
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 The Little Rascals
 King Kong — Fay Wray
 Cool Hand Luke — Paul Newman
 Sky King TV Show — Kirby Grant
 The Ten Commandments — C. Heston
 An Officer and a Gentleman

MANY SPECIAL ARTICLES & COLUMNS IN EACH ISSUE TOO! TAKE A LOOK!

- **IN MY OPINION** . . . A no holds barred column, by Harry B. Thomas that offers straight forward, down to earth comments about and around the hobby of movie collecting.
- **VIDEO NEWS** . . . It's a what's happening article that explores new titles, gives reviews, and includes most anything pertaining to the world of video.
- **MINI — MOVIE REVIEWS** . . . Psycho II, Wargames, Superman III, Octopussy, Stroker Ace, Staying Alive, and most all current releases are reviewed in each monthly issue of the big reel.
- **THOSE LOVEABLE CHARACTERS** . . . Herb Cline regularly features the character people of yesterday's Hollywood. Past issues have featured Ester Dale, Alan Hale Sr., J. Carroll Naish and many others.
- **THE PASSING SCENE** . . . Philip Castanza watches and reports the obituaries of movie personalities and people in the show business world.

OTHER RECENT ARTICLES INCLUDED THE FOLLOWING . . .

MARILYN MONROE REMEMBERED By writer James Haspiel, a fan that knew her well. Never before published photos, this was a big reel exclusive featuring the "off screen" Marilyn.

THOSE UNFORGETTABLE SADDLE PALS By Richard B. Smith III, B-western movie historian. A nostalgic look at those sidekicks that gave so much support to our cowboy heroes when they rode across the silver screen.

AN INTERVIEW WITH RICHARD (CAPTAIN MIDNIGHT) WEBB By big reel writer Bernie O'Heir.

THE BEST, WORST, AND MOST UNUSUAL HORROR FILMS An in-depth look at horror films through the eyes of the editors of consumer guide.

WESTERN FILM FAIR — CHARLOTTE Readers were able to visit the festival through the lens of photographer Grady Franklin.

All of the material listed here and articles were contained in the August 1983 issue. It contained 128 pages and featured more than 150 display advertisers and 8 full pages of classified ads.

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No. 1 JAMES WHALE by James Curtis. 267 pages. Published in 1982. \$16.50 which includes shipping. During the 1930s, the enigmatic James Whale directed twenty features that spanned the genres of war, mystery, adventure, light comedy, musical, and horror and became known as the maker of the classic *Frankenstein*, *The Old Dark House*, *The Invisible Man*, and *The Bride of Frankenstein*. The author has drawn extensively from archival sources, studio records, and the memories of a number of Whale's friends and co-workers.

“. . . admirably researched, authoritative and well-balanced. . . . The plentiful stills and photographs are excellent, many of them rarely, if ever, published before. Without question one of the major biographies of the year.”—FILM REVIEW ANNUAL, 1983-84

“At three times its price it would still be a bargain.”—FILMS IN REVIEW, February 1983

No. 2 CINEMA STYLISTS by John Belton. 384 pages. Published in 1983. \$19.50 which includes shipping. This collection of essays on visual style in the cinema examines the work of diverse directors and actors. Arranged according to degrees of stylization along with a spectrum that ranges from highly intrusive expressiveness (Hitchcock) to self-effacing stylistic invisibility (Hawks and Renoir), the figures dealt with in this book represent certain parameters of “implied authorship,” a concept originally set forth by Wayne C. Booth in *The Rhetoric of Fiction*.

“Some 20 personalities are subjected to Belton's exacting analyses, where the narrative structure and visual style of such directors as Chaplin and Griffith, Renoir, Mizoguchi and Hitchcock are knowledgeably appraised.”—BACK STAGE, April 1983.

No. 3 HARRY LANGDON by William Schelly. 249 pages. Published in 1982. \$16.00 includes shipping. Along with Charlie Chaplin, Harold Lloyd and Buster Keaton, Harry Langdon ranks as one of the four major movie clowns of the 1920s. At last, in this first full-length study of his dazzling and tragic career, Langdon steps out of the shadow of his famous director, Frank Capra. William Schelly adds fresh insights to the story of Langdon's rise from midwestern medicine shows, stardom at Mack Sennett Studios, conflicts with Frank Capra, and fall from public favor.

“Harry Langdon is, in my opinion, the last great Pierrot who played in silent movies.”—Marcel Marceau

“The filmography and synopses alone would make this book a valuable work of reference, but in addition there are a large number of really rare stills and portraits.”—FILM REVIEW ANNUAL, 1983-84

“. . . a compelling narrative. . . . The major strength of this study is its observant analysis of the subtleties of Langdon's 'minimalistic reactions' and the appeal of his childlike Little Elf clown persona. . . . a 'must' for comedy film fans”—CHOICE, February 1983



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No. 4 WILLIAM A. WELLMAN by Frank T. Thompson with a foreword by Barbara Stanwyck. 339 pages *illustrated. Published in 1983. \$22.50 includes shipping.* In 35 years of directing 80 motion pictures, William A. Wellman created classic like *Wings*, *The Public Enemy*, *A Star is Born*, *Nothing Sacred*, *Beau Geste*, *The Story of G.I. Joe* and *The High and The Mighty*, but his career as a whole has never been adequately studied.

This book is the first attempt of any length to examine Wellman's work as a whole, with attention to the aesthetics, history and production of each film and to the life experiences upon which he drew for his films. Highlighted by the most detailed Wellman filmography yet published.

No. 5 STANLEY DONEN by Joseph Andrew Casper. 300 pages. *Published in 1983. \$19.50 includes shipping.* Stanley Donen's entertainments have changed the face of the American film musical and given American film comedy sophistication, verve, and handsomeness; and yet the distinctive Donen signature has so far been overlooked by critics.

The author presents a critical analysis of the 26 films in Donen's continuing oeuvre: their origin, production, and the esthetic choices Donen and his collaborators made to enable the viewer to return from this imaginary world to the real one saner and perhaps a bit wiser. Throughout the text Donen himself speaks in a series of interviews with the author. Includes a chronology, filmography, textual notes, bibliography, and discography.

"I suspect that Stanley Donen is destined to become a seminal extension of the auteur theory."—from the Foreword by Arthur Knight.

No. 6 BRIAN DE PALMA by Michael Bliss. 176 pages *illustrated. Published in 1983. \$13.50 includes shipping.* Brian De Palma is generally hailed as our contemporary master of suspense, not only unfairly identifying him with the traditional master, Alfred Hitchcock, but also obscuring the individual stylistic touches that De Palma brings to his films.

Contrary to received opinion, De Palma's film work—including *Carrie*, *Obsession*, *The Fury*, *Dressed To Kill*, *Phantom of the Paradise*, and *Blow Out*—hardly reveals a man obsessed with terror for its own sake. Instead, as this first full-length study demonstrates through detailed analysis, each of De Palma's films can be viewed as an intelligent, organized meditation on the nature of violence and voyeurism, sex and power, passion and death.

....an excellent springboard for further discussion and interpretation of De Palma's films."—THE BIG REEL, September 1983

"Michael Bliss covers De Palma's works in a series of essays that ramble like good conversation. When you finish reading them, you will discover that Bliss has written excellent analyses of the works in a way that is scholarly, thoroughly professional and entertaining."—CLASSIC IMAGES, July 1983

ANOTHER BOOK NOT IN THE ABOVE SERIES

SOULS MADE GREAT THROUGH LOVE AND ADVERSITY: The Film Work of Frank Borzage by Frederick Lamster. 242 pages. *Published in 1981. \$12.50 includes shipping.* Frank Borzage was considered in his day to be the successor to D.W. Griffith as well as a great director of the art of melodrama. This study is an evaluation of Borzage as a film director and of his films as thematically consistent testaments to one man's beliefs.

....A valuable film contribution....covers a needed section of history."—Classic Images, November, 1981.

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HARMLESS ENTERTAINMENT: Hollywood and the Ideology of Consensus by *Richard Maltby*. 425 pages. Published in 1983. \$26.50 includes shipping. This study concentrates on the important relationship between film production as commercial enterprise and the society in which this product is consumed.

Because of the high economic and industrial risk in making movies a product consensual to the general public, the author argues that the major film companies readjusted their attitudes to moral and political censorship and thus began the conscious manufacture of what Hollywood termed "harmless entertainment."

"Maltby, a respected film scholar, has gone into impressive detail...."—CHOICE, October 1983

"[Hollywood's] ideology of consensus creates practical problems of filmic content that are examined in this thoughtful study."—VIDEO, November 1983

THE FILM AUDIENCE: An International Bibliography of Research With Annotations and an Essay by *Bruce A. Austin*. 224 pages. Published in 1983. \$16.50 includes shipping. This annotated bibliography of more than 1,200 film audience research studies fills a gap for film scholars and researchers in communications, sociology, psychology, history and popular culture, for librarians, and for film industry personnel.

Studies reporting data on such diverse topics as attitude change as a consequence of film viewing, cinematic neurosis, film marketing, psychological effects, research methodology and subliminal stimuli are presented, along with full bibliographic citations and annotations. Entries in the bibliography are arranged alphabetically by the first author's last name, with each entry assigned a citation number. Subject, title and non-primary author indexes are provided.

"An invaluable bibliographical index of international publications dealing with audience research, focusing on the relationship between commercial cinema and its theater patrons."—AMERICAN CINEMATOGRAPHER, October 1983

CHILDREN'S TELEVISION: THE FIRST THIRTY-FIVE YEARS, 1946-1981: Part 1: Animated Cartoon Series by *George W. Woolery*. 404 pages. Published in 1983. \$27.50 includes shipping. Brimming with behind-the-scenes insight gathered first-hand from original sources, this book provides a fascinating look at hundreds of animated cartoon characters who have paraded across the video screen. The author's exhaustive research documents broadly and in depth over 300 alphabetically arranged network series and syndicated packages.

Woolery's is the first book to narrate the growth of the animated TV series genre, from the uncensored vintage theatrical films to the structured pro-social vogue of the new series. A brief overview is supplemented by indexes and appendices.

"...fascinating.... Woolery has done a fine piece of research and the book demonstrates it.... an important addition to the literature of television history and....throughly entertaining...."—THE RERUNS REVIEW, July 1983

"...Woolery's long descriptions are a unique contribution to the growing body of literature and reference material on animation.... Recommended for all libraries serving cartoon buffs or media students, since Woolery presents the most-needed facts in an organized and accessible way."—CHOICE, October 1983

FAMOUS MOVIE DETECTIVES by *Michael R. Pitts*. 367 pages illustrated. Published in 1979. \$20.00 includes shipping. Two dozen of the most famous celluloid sleuths—Charlie Chan, The Falcon, Bulldog Drummond, The Lone Wolf, Philo Vance, Craig Kennedy and others—and their film careers. With 90 photographs from various detective films, complete filmography for each subject and a bibliography of each detective's literary work.

"...thorough and comprehensive...."—THE BIG REEL, January 1980

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UNIVERSAL TELEVISION: The Studio and Its Programs, 1950-1980 by Jeb H. Perry. Foreword by Roy Hugins. 499 pages illustrated. Published in 1983. \$32.50 includes shipping. The first book to survey the entire output of a TV studio, *Universal Television* chronicles the 200 series, 250 telefeatures, 20 pilots and 20 specials made by the company that has been the leading producer of video entertainment for over 30 years—among them *Alfred Hitchcock Presents*, *Leave It to Beaver*, *Wagon Train*, *The Jack Benny Show*, *The Rockford Files*, and *Quincy*.

Also a first for a book on television, the volume includes all available cast lists and production credits for the programs listed and data on networks, air dates, and sponsors. With an index of the individual credits of several thousand actors, production personnel and associated production companies; a list of Emmy Award nominees and winners; a list of theatrical films based on Universal Television series; and a selection of rare photographs.

"A mighty and formidable work....excellent and sound."—Lamont Johnson, Director of Universal Television programs.

"....well-researched documentation."—BACK STAGE, October 1983

STAR MYTHS: Show-Business Biographies of Film by Robert Milton Miller. 416 pages illustrated. Published in 1983. \$27.50 includes shipping. This is the first comprehensive study of one of the movies' most durable, popular, and misunderstood genres—the show-business biography, which Hollywood has been actively turning out for an interested and appreciative audience ever since the dawn of sound. Critics have noticed the "show-biz bio-film" only to dismiss it, overlooking its function as myth.

The author examines how the show-business biographical film has craftily twisted the truth in order to cater to the everchanging tastes of a curious and envious public during more than a half-century of celebrity worship and scandal mongering. Every film biography of an entertainment figure, from the glory days of *The Great Ziegfeld* to the agonies of *Mommie Dearest*, is discussed in detail, with individual chapters devoted to such specialists as bandleaders, comedians, singers, dancers, actors and songwriters. Over 125 bio-films made between 1930 and 1982 are covered, including both theatrical and made-for-television productions. Extensively illustrated with stills from the films, *Star Myths* also includes a complete filmography with cast and credits for each title.

LADIES OF THE EVENING: Women Characters of Prime-Time Television by Diana M. Meehan. 202 pages illustrated. Published in 1983. \$16.00 includes shipping. Combining two compelling topics of this decade—the video experience and women's studies—this book describes and analyzes the popular female characters who have peopled prime time from 1950 to present. Meehan explores the process of creating characters, the personalities and contexts of the fictional women of prime time, and the implications of the values and ideas presented. The descriptions are not only an index to the past but clues to the future, for our attitudes and expectations and the traits of the new generation of video heroines are influenced by these popular figures.

"....reveals the extent to which television has ignored some of the more significant aspects of women's lives."—BACK STAGE, October 1983.

CLOSE UP: THE HOLLYWOOD DIRECTOR. General Editor: Jon Tuska. Associate Editor: Vicki Piekarski. Research Editor: David Wilson. 454 pages illustrated. Published in 1978. \$25.00 includes shipping. Evaluations of the careers of Billy Wilder, Frank Capra, William Wyler, John Huston, William Wellman, Alfred Hitchcock, Douglas Sirk, Henry King, and Spencer Gordon Bennett.

"....Although much has been written about many of these directors, the material in this volume is fresh....A nice addition to the growing amount of literature on directors."—CLASSIC FILM COLLECTOR, Summer 1978.



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THE FILMS OF ROBERT ALTMAN by Alan Karp. 178 pages. Published in 1981. \$13.00 includes shipping. An in-depth study of one of America's most important and respected motion picture directors. Beginning with a brief biographical survey of his background and his early career, this book includes detailed analyses of all of Altman's major films (including **M*A*S*H**, **McCABE** and **NASHVILLE**, to name a few). These analyses focus upon scenes and structures, genre and myth, films and dreams, as well as the director's unique working methods, narrative strategies and visual style.

“....provides a solid basis for understanding the work of one of our most important film artists.”—**FILM QUARTERLY**, Summer 1982.

A GUIDE TO AMERICAN FILM DIRECTORS: The Sound Era: 1929-1979 by Larry Langman. 2 volumes (391 pages; 327 pages). Published in 1981. \$29.50 includes shipping. The first comprehensive guide to American film directors and their complete works during the sound era. Volume I is a complete guide to directors, covering every director and all the feature films, full-length documentaries and animated works of the period—more than two thousand directors and 18,000 films. Volume II is a film title index listing every sound film since 1929 with its release date and director.

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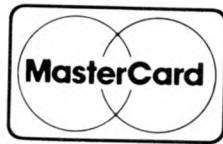
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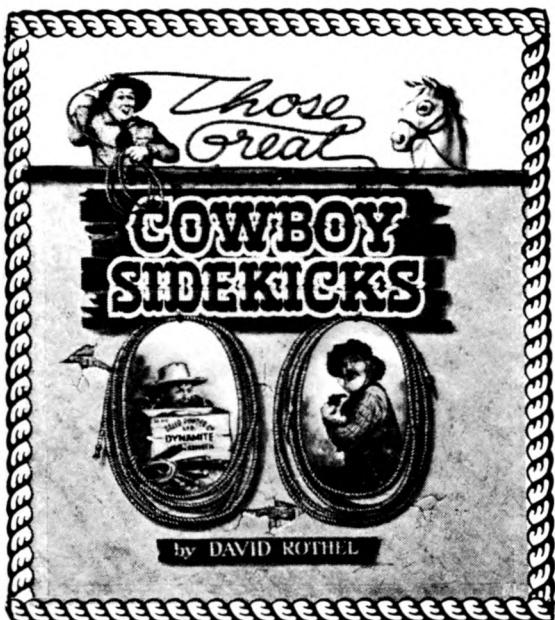
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